THE INSIDE PITCH:
RECENT EFFORTS AT PLANNING THE URBAN STADIUM

by

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ABSTRACT

Substantial attention has recently been focused in North America upon the venues in which spectator sports are played. Between 1992 and 1994, six professional football and baseball stadia will be built in the United States, and many more concepts will at least be given consideration. The importance of stadium planning has been given added significance with the awarding of the 1994 World Cup soccer tournament and the 1996 Summer Olympic Games to the United States.

A least two of the stadia to be built by 1994 will be located within established urban environments -as might several other projects currently under consideration. Building a stadium within the developed city provides particularly challenging problems for urban planners. These include fitting a building of such grandiosity into the urban fabric, selecting a suitable site based on considerations of access and land use compatibility, affecting with the sports facility the sense of the place it inhabits, and assessing and controlling the economic impacts of the sports facility.

Two recently completed urban stadia, Toronto's SkyDome and Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards, have drawn considerable attention due to their divergence from previously established stadium planning conventions. As such, each is a possible prototype for a new era in urban stadium planning. In this thesis the author will present case studies of both facilities, and will use them in examination of the above mentioned key issues associated with urban stadium planning.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Professional spectator sports are an integral element of North American society. It could be argued that no activity taking place in our cities consistently commands more attention. Few attractions other than baseball, for example, will attract over 1 million people in 26 cities across North America over a six month span, and will be televised to millions of others through a billion dollar television contract.

Over the past decade, substantial attention has been focused upon the facilities in which these sports are played. Between 1992 and 1994, six professional sports stadia will be built in cities across the United States -in Baltimore, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Arlington, Texas, and two in Atlanta- with at least 30 more concepts in some stage of planning.[1] And with the awarding of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games to Atlanta, and 1994 World Cup Soccer matches to nine American cities, the issue stadium planning has taken on added significance.

Three of the six stadia to be built be 1994 are certain to be located deep within urban boundaries. And the three professional sports stadia built since 1989 are situated amidst the fabric of their respective cities. Two of these, Toronto's SkyDome and Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards have drawn considerable attention due to their uniqueness, and as such represent possible new directions for urban stadium planning. The former represents an unprecedented multi-purpose stadium. The challenge for SkyDome's planners was to advance our ideas of the modern stadium while simultaneously moving away from the contextual ignorance that typifies almost all of the stadia built from the Sixties to the Eighties. With its modern aesthetic and broad spectrum of amenities, it has been designed to attract as much attention as any events inside. In contrast, Oriole Park will be the first major league "new-old" ballpark, designed in emulation of the sensitive, compact Golden Age ballparks of the early twentieth century. The charge for its planners and designers was not only to replicate traditional stadium design while incorporating modern amenities, but to design a stadium that responds to -rather than ignores- the surrounding urban context, and to

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[1]Dell'Apa, Frank "Tagliabue Cautious on Stadium" Boston Globe Sept. 23, 1991, p. 30

replicate traditional stadia's positive impacts on the character of nearby public spaces and on the image of the neighborhood.

One would expect that a stadium would be most disruptive when situated within a previously well defined, established and ordered surrounding, such as that imposed by the inner city. Indeed, there are four challenges that must be addressed in planning a stadium for the urban fabric. One is the issue of fitting a building of such scale into the urban fabric: unlike the ballparks of the early twentieth century, designers of most recent facilities have been unable to relate these massive structures to the human scale of the urban environment. They have thus earned such unflattering monikers as "cookie cutters" for their impact on established urban forms, "white elephants" for their conspicuous grandiosity, and "Flying saucers" for their general lack of belonging.

In planning a stadium for a dense urban setting, planners also face particular challenges in selecting a suitable site: Providing the amenities and transportation provisions that must accompany a stadium is particularly challenging is problematic for urban environments. Few developed areas are capable of handing the surges of traffic to and from these facilities, while the need to find a site with compatible land uses, given the high densities of urban development, must be resolved.

There is also a question of the ability of a stadium to affect a Sense of Place. The ability of a sports facility to influence our impressions of the place they inhabit is understood in looking at the stadia built during the "Golden Age" of the early twentieth century. But as the concept has been lost on designers and planners of more recently built stadia, few lay persons would even think it possible for a stadium to enhance our definition of -or even give definition to a place.

The economic impacts are perhaps the ones most commonly considered. Although the notion that stadia positively impact local economies is widely assumed and is used in defense of large public expenditures on stadium projects, the actual economic benefits of stadia are being brought into question. Furthermore, it is not clear that planners have appropriately planned areas around stadia for "spin-offs" and other benefits.

In this thesis I will examine these problems, using SkyDome and Oriole Park as case studies. The purpose is not to compare the two projects. Rather, as prototypes of the new urban stadium, they will be evaluated in regards to how they address the problems of mitigating impacts of size and scale, choosing an appropriate site, affecting a sense of place, and planning for economic benefits.

After a brief overview of the history of stadia and stadium planning in North America, each case is presented in detail , including descriptions of the projects, the people most responsible for their construction, the motivating factors behind their construction and chosen locations, and impacts as assessed thus far. The four issues will are then addressed independently, with reference made primarily to the two cases but also to other new stadium projects.

CHAPTER 1: The History of Stadium Planning in North America

Many would argue that professional sports and the sports stadium (or park) are two quintessential elements of American culture. Indeed, the evolution of the venues in which the 'Great American Pastime' and later football have been played reflect significant changes experienced by our society. North Americans have witnessed changes in scale, scope of activities, location and in dialogue with the surrounding urban setting. The purpose of this chapter is to outline these changes and the forces that lay behind them.

The Golden Age Ballparks

Many Americans perceive professional sports as having evolved only recently from recreational activities into an industry driven by the pursuit of profit. In fact, the impact of the business of baseball on the planning of venues can be traced back to the most revered era of venue construction, the Golden Age of the early twentieth century.

Until the 1860's, baseball existed as a friendly pastime, engaged in by over 200 amateur clubs[1]. The concept of a stadium was not yet born, as interested onlookers found ample room around any field or meadow in which a game might have been played. It was not until the first professional team was formed, the 1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings, and the first pro league founded (the National League in 1876) that baseball entrepreneurs carried out formal efforts to attract fans and to provide adequate venues in which to enjoy the game. The first ballparks were, however, no more than wooden grandstands, designed to varying degrees of elaboration, stretched along the foul lines[2].

But by the turn of the century, several forces worked to increase the significance and prominence of the baseball park. While explosive urban growth increased the market

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[1]Neilson, Brian J. "Dialogue with the City: The Evolution of Baseball Parks", Landscape v 29, 1, 1986, p. 39
[2]Neilson, p. 39

for baseball, it was the character of this new urban population that, according to some, made the game popular and, thus, new stadium construction feasible.

> Mass spectator sports offered a common focus for disparate native and immigrant groups... [Baseball] has always furnished cultural heroes who were less "Irish" or "German" or "Italian" than "American"... The new ballparks are arenas in which abstractions of "citizenship", "the rules", and "belonging" were dramatized.[3]

Professional baseball not only appealed to the new immigrant sector of urban society, but also to the newly urbanized. At a point in which the "myth of the small town" was becoming increasingly difficult to realize with the urbanization of America, this pastoral, expansive, and time-independent activity "reassured old-stock folk that their traditional small-town values were still relevant to society."[4]

The era of Golden Age ballparks was born, in part, of efforts to reap the financial dividends of such sentiments, as existing facilities could not sufficiently accommodate the rapidly growing urban markets. In addition, the dangers associated with wooden, public-gathering spaces were becoming all-too evident around the turn of the century. In 1894 alone, there were at least five fires in major-league parks. The repeated loss of parks to fire, along with the 1903 theater fire in Chicago sensitized urbanites to the need for stricter building codes for semi-public places.[5] Advances in steel and concrete building technologies, previously restricted to skyscraper construction, were consequently used by 14 of 16 professional teams to build much larger (more lucrative) and safer venues for the game of baseball.[6]

In an era predating the affordability of the automobile, baseball businessmen would rely heavily on the cities' growing urban transit systems and walking distance proximity to attract the thousands need to fill these new confines. Baseball owners built their parks on the then-urban fringe, predominately middle-class neighborhoods, where

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[3]Neilson, p. 40
[4]Riess, Steven A.: City Games: The Evolution of Urban Society and the Rise of Sports. University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1989, p. 209.
[5]Riess, p. 217
[6]Neilson, 40

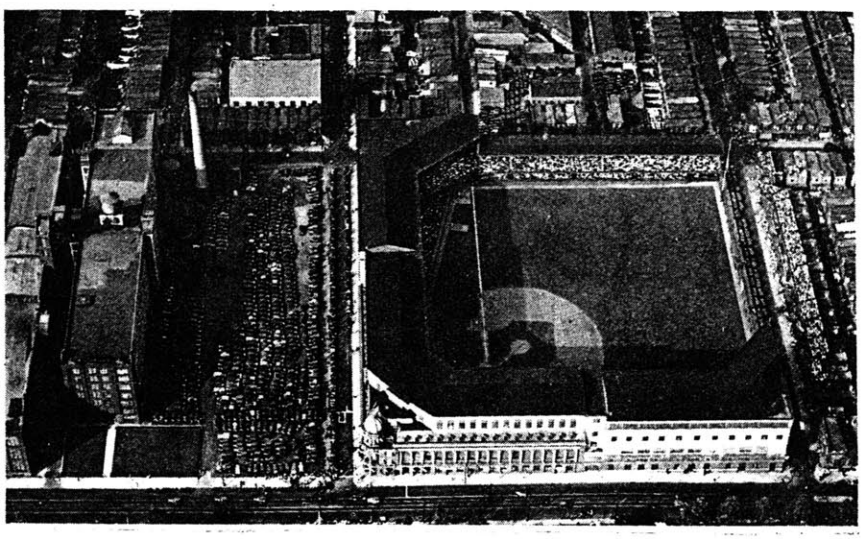

Figure 1.1
Shibe Park, Philadelphia
(Ray Madeiros)

the ballparks could benefit fully from the rapid dispersion and extensions of street-car and subway lines. Indeed, the location of the Golden Age parks was directly tied to transit routes: Franchise owners are said to have used their extensive political connections, coercion, and graft to learn the location of upcoming transit line extensions, and at one point it was estimated that 15% of businessmen in baseball were traction executives.[7]

Despite their location along the edges of their respective cities, the Golden Age ballparks, reflecting an unprecedented grandeur and permanence for sporting venues, achieved a sense of modesty by respecting sight restrictions imposed by existing circulation routes and burgeoning residential settlement. Each stadium is therefore as physically unique as their urban confines. The perfectly square Shibe Park, for example, reflected the rigid perpendicular nature of the Philadelphia grid (Figure 1.1).

The respect, sensitivity, and uniqueness portrayed in the shape of each Golden Age ballpark is equally evident at street-level, despite emphasis on functionality by

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[7]Riess, p. 209

Figure 1.2
Shibe Park, Philadelphia
(Taylor Publishing Co.)

Figure 1.3
Ebbets Field, Brooklyn,
(Taylor Publishing Co.)

owners and designers[8]. Almost all of the parks have external facades, for instance, which meet the street close-up, providing no more open space between structure and street surface than might nearby walk-ups or warehouses. Indeed, their external facades in many cases do not parallel internal dimensions, suggesting a conscious effort to promote the sense of public street space along the parks' edges.

This dialogue between ballpark and surroundings was enhanced in some cases by the provision of street-level activities, such as ticket offices, souvenir stands, and pubs, and by the use of popular local architectural styles. Shibe Park's neo-Georgian exterior (Figure 1.2), a style used for many of the city's public buildings[9], and Ebbets Field's masonry façade and arched windows for example (Figure 1.3), made the venues genuine elements of their respective communities, while rendering them distinguishable among the leagues' ballparks.

The Post-War Stadia

The Golden Age ballparks proved satisfactory for quite some time. The thirty years after the completion of Yankee Stadium in 1923 (considered the last Golden Age facilities to be built) witnessed only one stadium project (Cleveland Municipal Stadium). However, beginning in 1953, fifteen major league stadia were built across the country in a twenty-year span.

While this mid-century, or Post-War wave of stadium construction was the product of a host of social and economic forces, the fundamental influence had been carried over for the Golden Age: the maximization of baseball's profitability. At a time when ballparks were in need of major renovations, and surrounding neighborhoods were deteriorating, emerging urban centers searching for image enhancement, psychological boosts, and national stature, courted team owners with promises of new, larger, and (most

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[8]Riess, p. 219
[9]Neilson, p. 43

Figure 1.4
Jack Murphy Stadium, San Diego
(Taylor Publishing Co.)

importantly) publicly-funded stadia. The financial successes experienced by the Braves following their move from Boston to Milwaukee in 1953 convinced league officials to approve the moves of the Browns from St. Louis to Baltimore and of the A's from Philadelphia to Kansas City.[10] Perhaps what speaks most clearly to the profit potential of America's emerging cities was the relocation of the Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants -both historically popular and successful franchises- to Los Angeles and San Francisco, respectively

Sports entrepreneurs were also able to prey on the enthusiasm of emerging cities by expanding their leagues. Professional football, which experienced a rapid growth in popularity following the war, grew from 13 to 28 teams by 1977, while the number of

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[10]Riess, p. 235

baseball teams expanded from 16 to 26 teams. Increased league attendance was only a minor force behind decisions to expand, as expanded television audiences (the basis for television contracts) and expansion fees became the prime sources of league revenues[11].

This financial force behind the growing popularity of professional football and baseball leagues is evidenced in the facilities that were built. The value of the television contracts, for example, forced the issue of TV viewing into the stadium design equation; camera angles would have to be ideal and views totally unobstructed. As another example, the loss of intimacy associated with the transition from Golden Age to Post-War facilities is in part a function of the rise of public financing. Whereas early century stadium and baseball team owners were one in the same, the adoption of municipal funding and ownership arrangements has meant a differentiation between the interests of the baseball team and the interests of the facility managers. Thus, cities such as San Diego's Jack Murphy Stadium, for example (Figure 1.4) have sought not only to accommodate baseball, but also activities ranging from professional football to concerts in an effort to at least break even on their investments.

The design solution arrived at in response to these issues has been a configuration which attempts to accommodate all such activities but in fact is not optimal for the viewing of any: round "cookie cutters" or "concrete donuts" of immense proportions. The potential to host infrequent -and thus highly demanded- events (including football, which is played 10 times per season compared to baseball's 81 home games) led to design capacities of 50,000-80,000 -well beyond the 20,00-45,000 seat range of their Golden Age, baseball-only predecessors. Many other elements of their design serve to separate fans from the contests, such as the use of cantilevered, recessed tiers (Figure 1.5) and the orientation of each seat towards the center of the stadium -totally unrelated to the type of activity taking place within.

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[11]Riess, p. 238

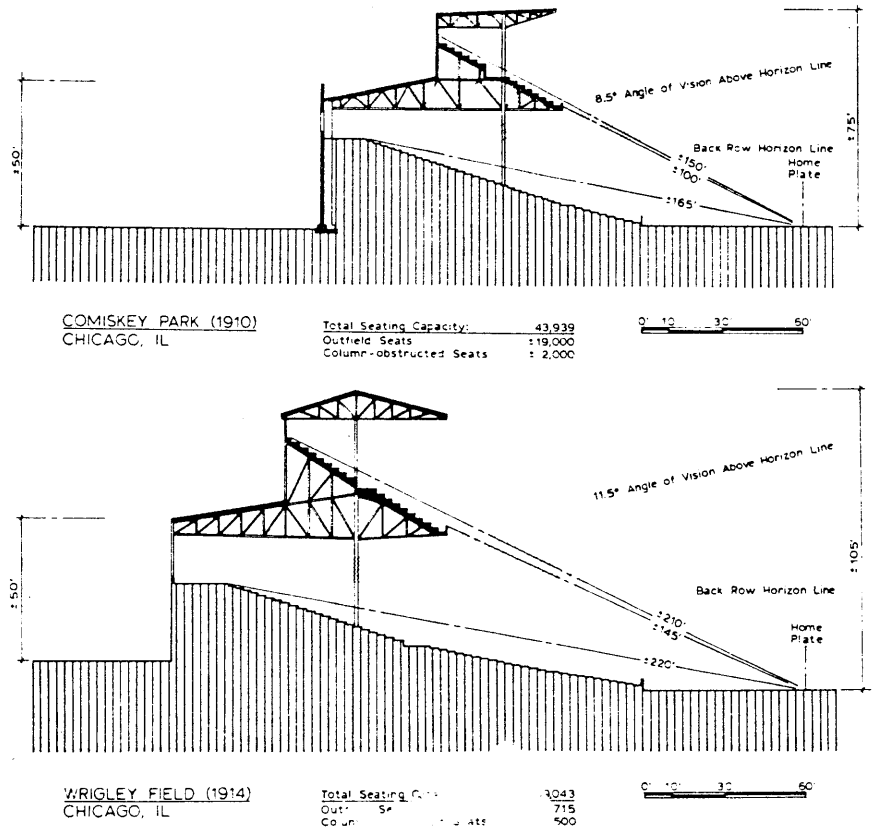

Figure 1.5
Wrigley Field, Comiskey Park, Chicago
(Philip Bess)

Some have argued that in addition, the internal arrangement of the Post-War stadia reflects a major social transition of the time: the suburbanization of American cities. The physical separation of box seats, pricey lower deck seats, and general admission bleachers signified the "rise and dispersal of the earlier working class"[12], and the use of space to distinguish and separate socio-economic groups.

Congruent with the internal suburban character and lost intimacy of stadia during this Post-War era was the loss of external attractiveness and association with the urban context. Not only because their massive, circular forms contrast sharply with the

[12]Neilson, p. 45

geometry of the urban networks, but also because of their orientation towards the automobile -the tool of suburbanization. Increased personal mobility freed stadium builders in the 1950's, 60's, and 70's from considering only those sights accessible by transit; while exploding demand for stadium parking (a function of the audiences' shift to the expansive, auto-oriented suburbs) has prevented their situation within the developed city. Thus by 1970, 20% of all football and baseball facilities were located in the suburbs[13].

The suburban sense of the Post-War stadium is perhaps witnessed best in cases where these prototypes were in stamped into the cityscape. In such cases, the stadia virtually ignore the preexisting urban boundaries. Busch Stadium for example consumed 9 blocks of downtown St. Louis (Figure 1.6). Accommodating these imposing facilities therefore massively disrupted established patterns of land use, activity, and circulation. As writer Brian Neilson has suggested, the Post-War inner-city stadia have "burst the confines of urban history".[14]

This sense is all too perceivable at street level. For many of these facilities, such as Atlanta Fulton County Stadium (Figure 1.7), a relationship with the surrounding city and streets is precluded by their burial in an asphalt grave. And those situated in close confines present awkward, curved façades that peel away from surrounding streets; emphasizing the fact that unlike most urban structures, their configuration is totally independent of surrounding buildings and thoroughfares. Athletic facilities were being conceived as freestanding objects[15] amidst urban environments that had been defined by social, physical, and economic interrelations.

The adoption of a standard architectural style over local vernaculars has served to perpetuate both the Post-War stadia's lack of belonging and their anonymity. The Post-War era, however, saw an abandonment of individual architectural style as each stadium

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[13]Riess, p. 241
[14]Neilson, p. 45
[15]Lowry, Philip A. Green Cathedrals, Society for American Baseball Research, Cooperstown, NY 1986, p.9

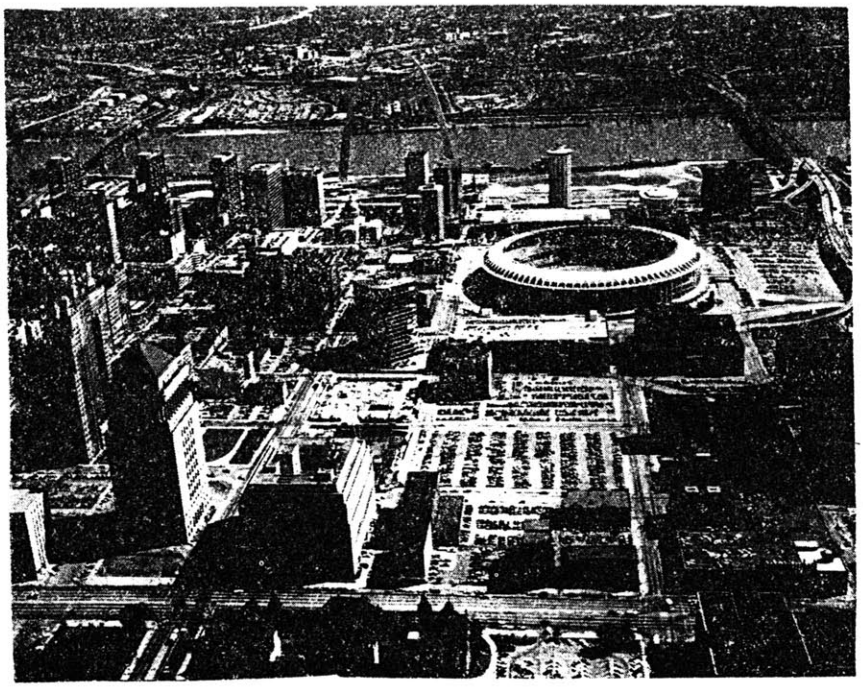

Figure 1.6
Busch Stadium, St. Louis
(St. Louis Cardinals publicity photo)

Figure 1.7
Fulton County Stadium, Atlanta
(Atlanta Braves publicity photo)

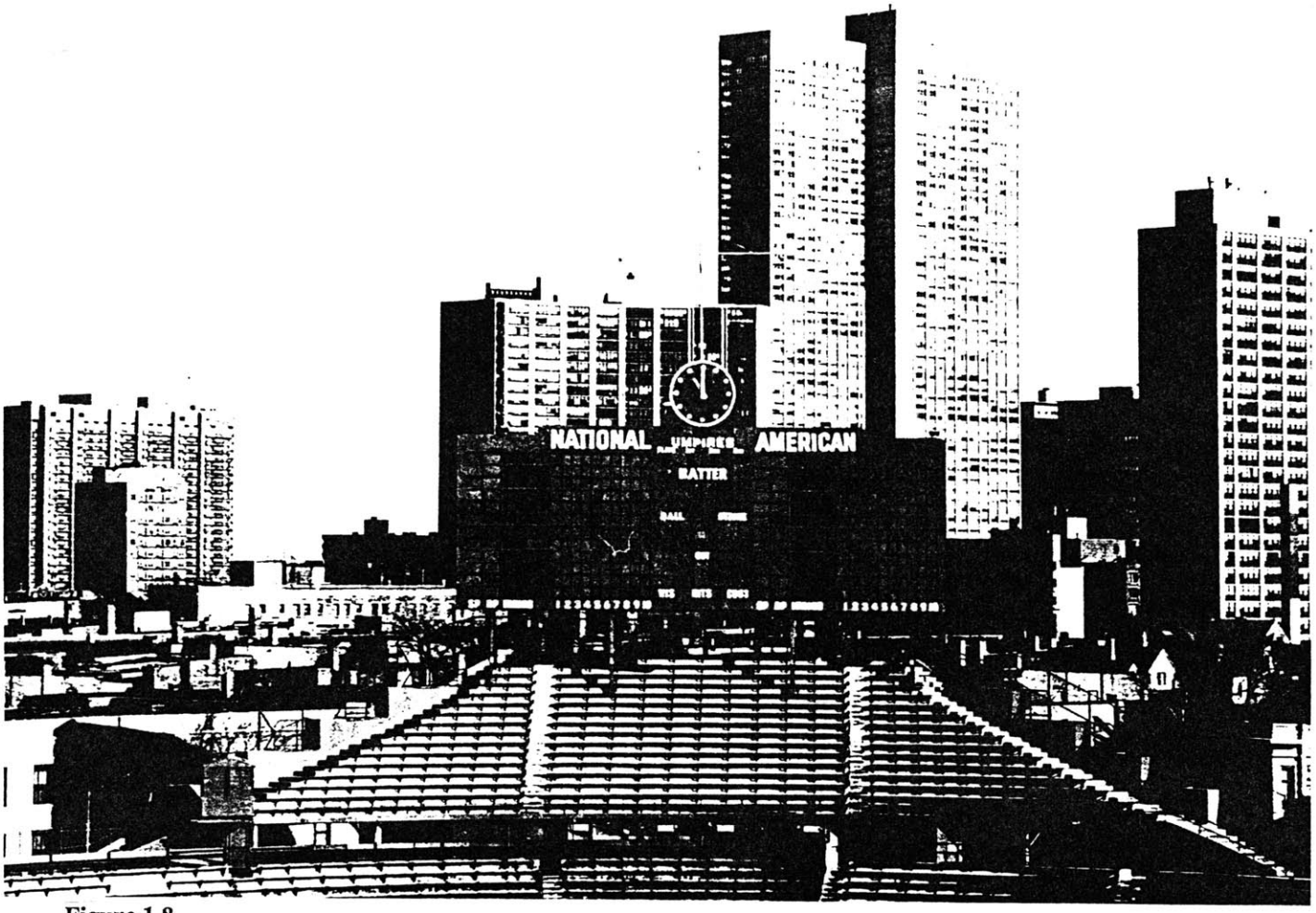

Figure 1.8
The view beyond Wrigley Field's outfield, Chicago
(Brian James Neilsen)

sought an identical level of simplicity and functionality, characterized by massive concrete columns, exposed circulation ramps, and a total absence of human scale articulation (Note Figure 1.7)."Modern ballparks" as the late former Commissioner of Baseball contended, "are the most conventional architecture since Mussolini's social realism."[16]

The view from inside further enhances the Post-War stadia's disassociation with their respective cities. Unlike their Golden-Age predecessors, in which skylines and

[16]Agnell, Roger "The Sporting Scene: Celebration" The New Yorker, Aug. 22, 1988, p 56

townhouse roofs loom over the outfield walls, giving the parks definition and identity (Figure 1.8), the total enclosure of the Post-War doughnuts severs connections between the fans, the game, and the city. "I stand at the plate in Philadelphia", said former player Richie Hebner, "and I don't honestly know whether I'm in Pittsburgh, St. Louis, or Philly."[17]

The Modern Stadia

The most recent phase of stadium construction is in most regards an extension of the Post-War era. There are, however, some factors which render this era distinct.

With the continued proliferation of stadia through the Post-War era, market conditions would suggest that economics could not realistically be considered a motivating factor behind continued stadium construction, despite public officials claims to the contrary. While the most recent stadia have -like their predecessors- been built on promises of economic benefits, some argue that a scenario has evolved in which too many stadia are pursuing too few events for facilities not to lose money. Furthermore, it is argued, stadia can no longer rely on revenue through regular tenants, such as football and baseball teams: the growth in the number of professional-caliber facilities well beyond the number of franchises has created a tenants market in which teams may force inexpensive lease arrangements by threatening to relocate to another city[18].

Indeed, recent stadium projects, according to economist Robert Baade, have been driven by the supposed image conveyed by the presence of a professional sports franchise. It could be argued that professional franchises have been used since their inception to define North America's high-order, "Big League" cities. But with the continuing urbanization of North America, there has evolved more viable population bases than franchises, leading to competition for the badges of honor that are sports

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[17]Knack, Ruth, "Stadiums: The Right Game Plan?" Planning, October, 1986, p.11

[18]Baade, Robert "Is There an Economic Rationale for Subsidizing Sports Stadiums?" Heartland Policy Study, The Heartland Institute, #13, Feb. 23, 1987, p. 7 -10

teams. Building a stadium as a franchise magnet therefore became a supposedly viable means of image enhancement.

In addition to providing satisfactory confines for these representatives of the urban image, the stadia themselves have also become a means by which a city's image is arguably affected, as evidenced by the one aesthetic feature that defines the modern stadium -the dome. While some have argued that the construction of eleven domed stadia between 1977 and 1993* speaks to their "financial... acceptance"[19] and to the fact that covered stadia will guarantee larger crowds, a greater conceivable range of tenants, and the plausibility of sporting events year-round for even the most inclement cities, the sheer cost of their construction and maintenance belies, according to others, any economic rationale for their construction. In fact, Baade argues, "[domed stadiums] have become a symbol of urban success and prestige",[20] - a symbol so powerful that it overrules the reality of $5 million annual operating debts.[21]

Many of these stadia are indeed quite striking -serving as landmarks and as *the* defining element for many urban landscapes. Unfortunately however, many of the modern era urban stadia were designed as physical and aesthetic continuations of the Post-War prototype -equally lacking in notions of unique design, human scale, and contextual sensitivity. Their isolation from the elements with which their neighboring land uses must cope -while technologically intriguing- is conceivably an exacerbation of the diminishing perceivable relationship between the athletic facility and the urban environment.

New Directions

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* Figure includes Atlanta's Georgia Dome, under construction at the time of this writing

[19] de Flon Rick: "Design for Leisure ", Architectural Record, June, 1991, p. 58

[20] Steacy, Anne "Domes of Distinction", MacLean's, June 12, 1989, p. 46

[21] Baade, p. 5

While it has been in municipalities best interests economically to build multi-purpose facilities, the Post War and Modern solutions have ultimately proven to be unsuccessful; scheduling conflicts and sub-optimal (and therefore less lucrative) seating arrangements have forced both baseball and football tenants to escape to single-use facilities. Within a five year span during the 1980's, four football teams relocated to football-only facilities, while baseball's commissioner concluded in 1986 that "it is baseball's desire to see their franchises play in stadiums that are built for baseball."[22] Thus, based on the models of multi-purpose stadia that had been provided, it had been concluded that the best scenario would be for football and baseball teams to play in their own facilities.[23]

Enclosed stadia have, in addition, experienced substantial problems with their initially awe-inspiring roofs. Although their high construction costs have been absorbed by municipalities in the past, the escalation of construction costs and a history of annual operating deficits "have galvanized taxpayer resistance to such projects."[24] Furthermore, the types of domes available have not proven to be satisfactory. The earliest, solid-roof concepts have not only result in dungeon-like interior character that is unpleasant for patrons, but have been accused of further undermining the economic feasibility of several projects. The economic failings of the Louisiana Superdome are a function of its inability to attract a baseball team (as had been planned for initially), while the Seattle Kingdome, another concrete-roof facility, has consistently drawn below average baseball crowds and is in danger of losing the franchise only twenty years after its opening. It is not clear that subsequent air-supported and cable-supported fabric roof concepts provide adequate alternatives. Expensive mechanical difficulties of the former, including lack of durability, energy inefficiency, and even deflation, have tended to override any benefits, while the only operational cable-roof structure, the St. Petersburg Sun-Coast Dome, has been unable to attract a long-term tenant in the four years since its construction.

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[22]Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co., American Sports Associates, URS Corporation : Report on Phase 1: Evaluation of Stadium Site and Design Alternatives , Peat Marwick, Mitchell & Company, Dec. 1, 1986, p. 40

[23]Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co., Dec. 1, 1986, p. 40

[24]Baade, p. 5

Stadium design is thus on the verge of a new era, as two recently completed stadium projects have sought to provide resolutions in response to these shortcomings. Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards embodies all of the stadium criteria set out by former Baseball Commission Peter Uberroth, including natural grass, and a seating capacity appropriate for baseball (roughly 40,000),[25] and in addition provides all of the amenities and luxuries common to most modern facilities. The ballpark reaches back even further though, packaging these niceties in a quirky, intimate interior, and a distinct yet modest exterior that are reminiscent of the revered ballparks of the Golden Age.

Toronto's SkyDome, on the contrary, implores us to further consider the concept of the multiple-use facility, suggesting that the idea has not been taken to its limits. With technical wizardry, SkyDome is able to overcome the previously stifling dilemmas of having to choose between either permanent exposure or enclosure, and of having to submit to fixed, sub-optimal seating arrangements. This unprecedented flexibility, combined with an awe-inspiring program force SkyDome well beyond the vision of multi-purpose and domed stadia to which we have become accustomed to the past twenty years.

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[25]Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co., Dec. 1, 1986, p.39

CHAPTER 2: Oriole Park at Camden Yards

1. Inner Harbor
2. Central Business District (CBD)
3. University of Maryland
4. Ridgely's Delight
5. Sharp/ Leadenhall Neighborhood
6. Otterbein Neighborhood
7. Otterbein Church
8. Potential Convention Center Expansion
9. Camden Station
10. Camden Warehouse
11. Existing Rail Corridor - CSX and MARC Service
12. Light-Net Building

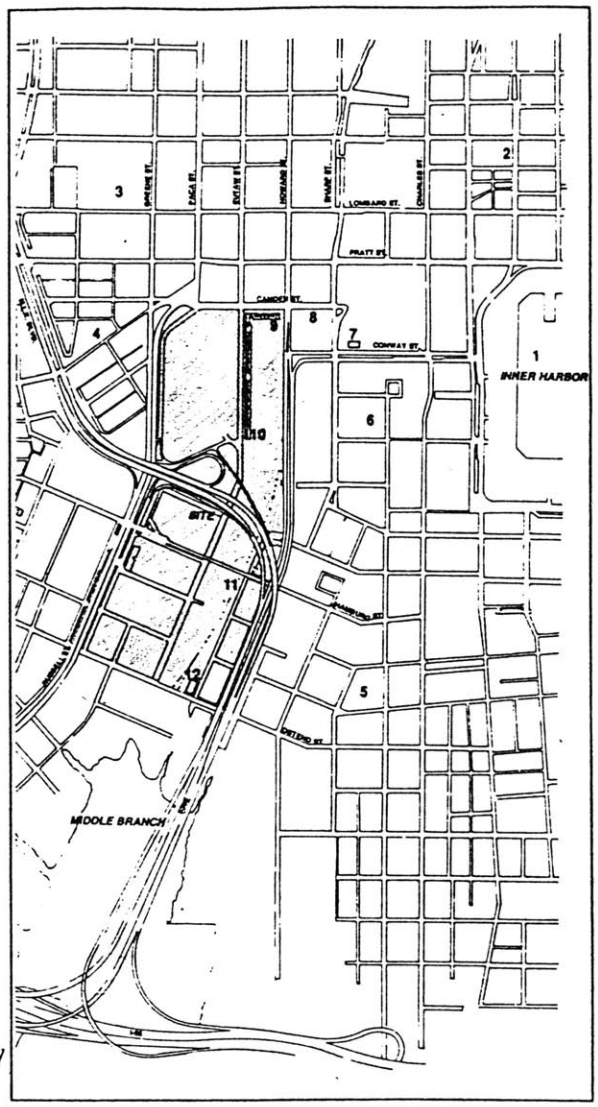

Figure 2.1
Camden Yards and Vacinity
(RTKL Associates, Inc.)

Few stadium projects have been as eagerly awaited as Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards, which opened in April of 1992 after four years of planning. Before ground had even been broken, baseball critics were convinced that Oriole Park, with its period architecture, and Golden Age-like asymmetry was enough to usher in a new era of ballpark stadium design. Urban design critics were equally enthusiastic, convinced that the ballpark has single-handedly toppled the era of the the sleeping giant sports stadium.

Figure 2.2
Camden Station as seen from Howard St.
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

Figure 2.3
Camden Warehouse as seen from the East
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

Yet the significance of the Oriole Park project goes well beyond its aesthetic elegance. The decision to locate a stadium dowtown, questions of functional compatibility with downtown uses, and blending such an historically ominous land use into the urban fabric -both funtionally and aethetically- were among the key planning problems that had to be addressed. The purpose of this chapter will be to detail these and other planning challenges associated with the Oriole Park project, and to outline the influences associated with each.

Camden Yards Site and Context

Located on the western fringe of the city's central business district (CBD), Baltimore's Camden Yards site is bound by Russell Street to the west and Interstate 395/Howard Street to the east -both of which connect to Interstate 95 to south- and by Camden Street to the north and the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River to the south (Figure 2.1). Martin Luther King Boulevard bisects the site above grade, while Hamburg and Ostend Streets also pass over the site from east to west.

Camden Yards has historically functioned as an industry and transportation hub for the City. Although originally subdivided for residences as part of the 1729 founding of Baltimore Town, the emergence of the railroad during the mid 1800's quickly changed the character of the area. Twenty five years after the 1830 construction of the nation's first railroad station less than a mile from the site, Camden Station was built on the site's northeast corner. (See Figures 2.1 & 2.2). When fully completed, it was for a time the largest train station in the United States.[1] The railyards and related uses continued to expand through the turn of the century[2], further delineating the indusrial character of the area. A major element of this growth was the Camden Warehouse, constructed in segments

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[1]RTKL Associates, Inc.: Master Plan Progress Report: Camden Yards Sports Complex Development Plan for the Maryland Stadium Authority, Nov. 8, 1988, p. 2.9

[2]RTLK Associates, Inc., p. 2.9

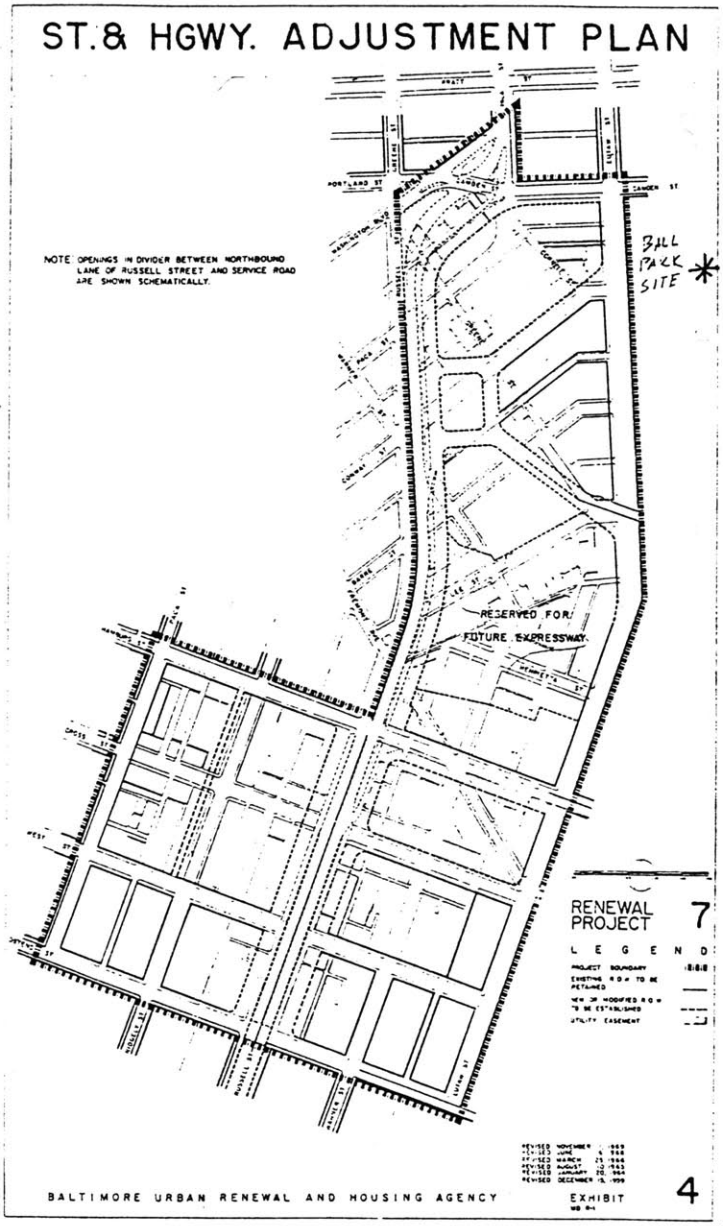
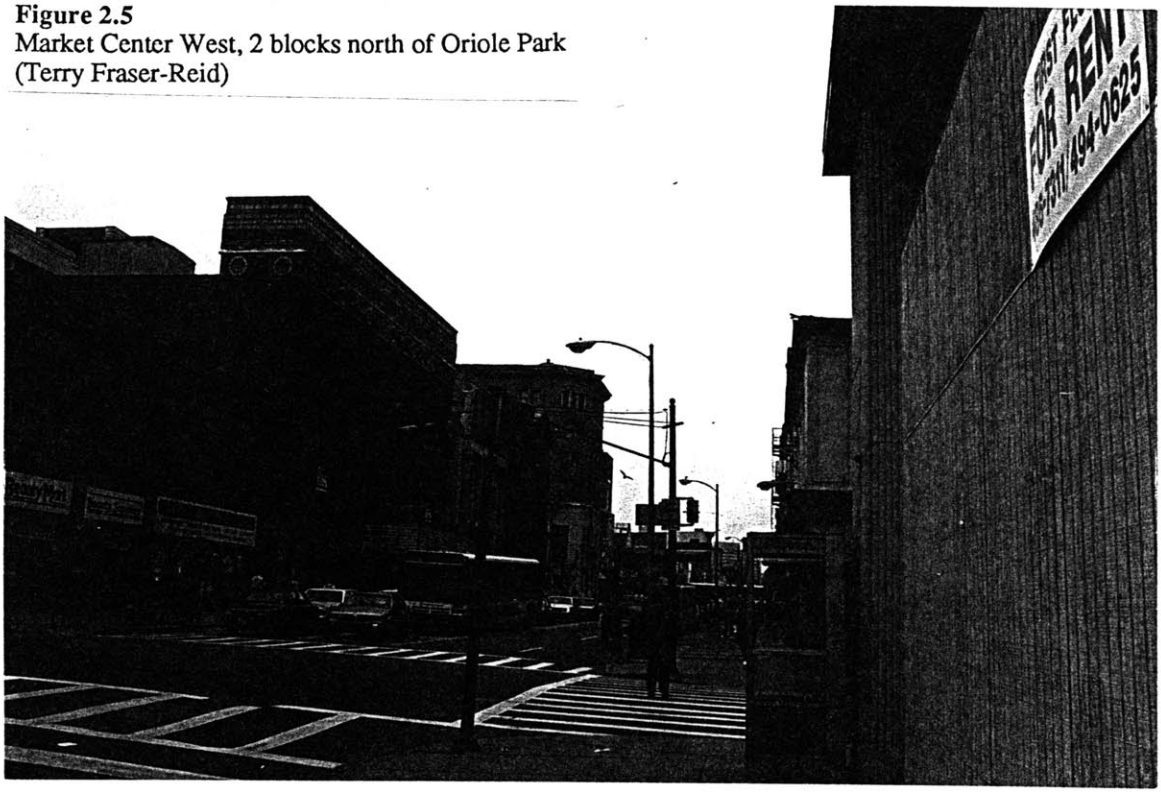


Figure 2.4
Street reconfiguration as part of the 1970 Camden Urban Renewal Project
(City of Baltimore Dept. of Housing and Community Development)

between 1889 and 1905 (Figure 2.3). Both the station and warehouse remain on the site to this day.

As industry expanded, the quality of life in the residential neighborhoods west of the warehouse declined consistently over the first half of the twentieth century. Citing an incorrigible mix of residential and inharmonious land uses, and a majority of structures that

Figure 2.5
Market Center West, 2 blocks north of Oriole Park
(Terry Fraser-Reid)



1. CAMDEN STATION
   1855-1867
2. CAMDEN WAREHOUSE
   1898-1905
3. WAREHOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
   1898
4. OTTERBEIN CHURCH
   1785
5. BABE RUTH BIRTHPLACE
   Date Unknown
6. MARYLAND CUP BUILDING
   1869 (KNABE PIANO FACTORY)
7. BROMO SELTZER TOWER
   1911
8. DAVIDGE HALL
   1812
9. ROBINS PAPER COMPANY BUILDING
   1870
10. WESLEY CHAPEL
    Date Unknown
11. MARTINI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
    Date Unknown
12. SPRING GARDEN GAS TANKS
    Site Use Since 1875

Figure 2.6
Historical landmarks near Camden Yards
(RTKL Associates, Inc.)

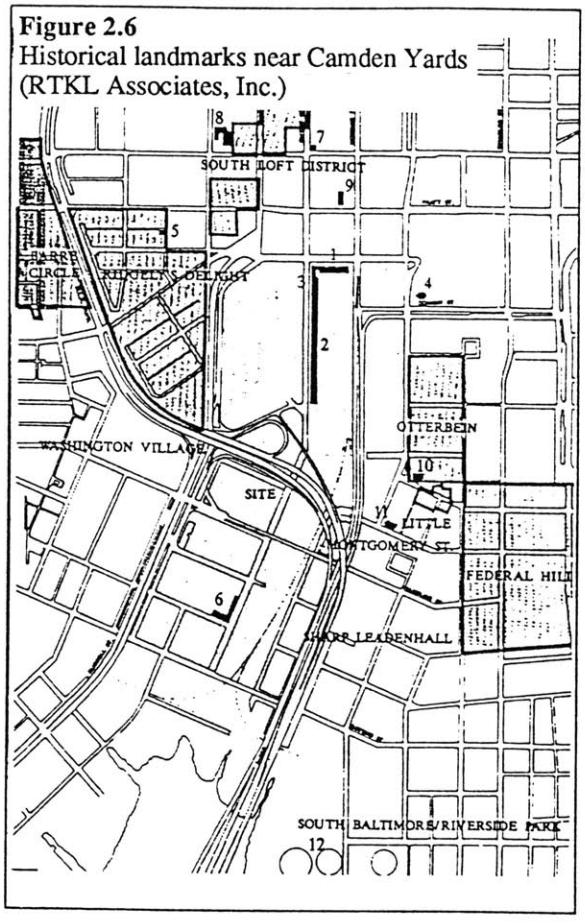


Figure 2.7
Ridgley's Delight, directly across Russell St. from Oriole Park
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

were sub-standard, the City in 1970 implemented an urban renewal plan that led to the acquisition and clearance of 22 blocks of developed urban fabric[3]. In place of the two hundred year old street grid, the City re-subdivided the property in a fashion most suitable for -and attractive to- light industrial uses (Figure 2.4). Light manufacturing and related uses persisted on site up until their displacement by the stadium project.

Camden Yards is surrounded by a diverse set of activities. The area directly north of Camden Yards, Market Center West, is characterized by a mix of low-end residential, commercial, and retail activity (Figure 2.5). The area is in a state of deterioration, with little demand for space and structures in various degrees of blight. The city approved an urban

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[3]Department of Housing and Community Development: Urban Renewal Plan, Camden Industrial Park, Project MD R-1, June 1, 1970, p. 18,19

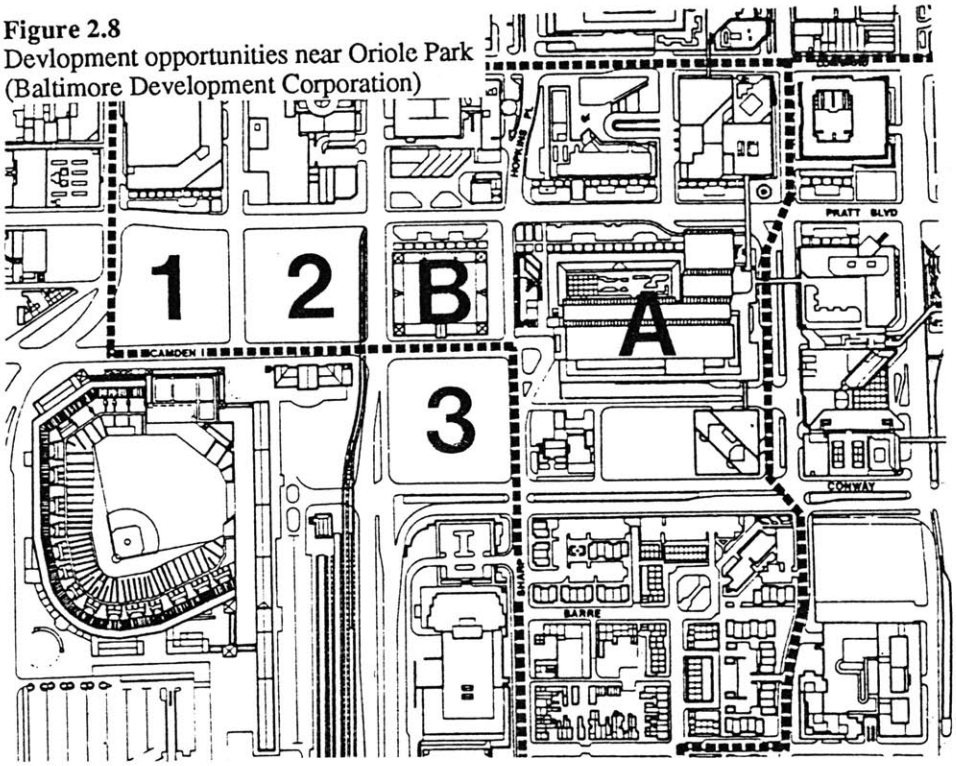

Figure 2.8
Devlopment opportunities near Oriole Park
(Baltimore Development Corporation)

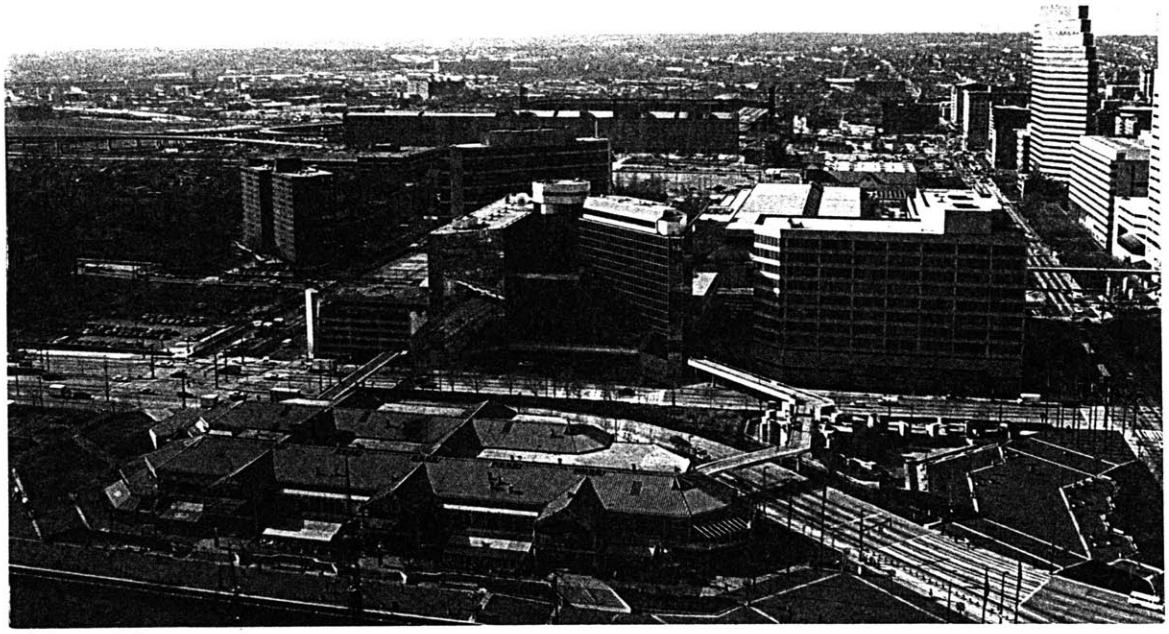

Figure 2.9
Inner Harbor West, Camden Yards in the background
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

renewal plan for the area in 1984, with the objective of establishing "a positive and identifiable image for the neighborhood."[4]

Directly east and west of Camden Yards are two historically significant residential neighborhoods that bound the ballpark's eastern and western edges (Figure 2.6). Immediately across Russell Street to the west is Ridgely's Delight (Figure 2.7), a currently middle-income neighborhood that, as one of Baltimore's original neighborhoods, has been designated as a National Register Historic District. One block to the east of the ballpark site is the Otterbein neighborhood, a Baltimore City Historic District.[5] The area boasts many other historic places and landmarks in addition to Ridgely's Delight, Otterbein, and the on-site features (Figure 2.6). These include four other neighborhoods recognized by the National Register within 1/2 mile of the Camden Yard site; the Bromo Seltzer Tower, a local landmark built in 1911; and Babe Ruth's Birthplace, located in Ridgely's Delight and now operating as a baseball museum.

While the area surrounding Camden Yards has continued to convey a historical significance, the ballpark site is also proximal to areas that have undergone extensive and rapid transformations. Immediately across Howard and Camden Streets from Camden Yards is the Inner Harbor West, the product of an urban renewal plan first initiated in 1971 (Figures 2.8 & 2.9). Covering 68 acres over 12 blocks, the area has become a focus of Baltimore's business and commercial activities. The area currently holds nearly 1 million SF of office and retail space and four hotels with total of 1525 rooms[6].

In conjunction with these, Inner Harbor West also features the city's two main exhibit spaces. Two blocks from Camden yards is the 147,000 square foot Convention Center, located at the eastern terminus of Camden Street (Figure 2.8, A). Immediately to its

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[4]Department of Housing and Community Development: Urban Renewal Plan, Market Center West, June 19, 1984, p.3

[5]RTLK Associates, Inc., p. 2.10

[6]Center City-Inner harbor Development, Inc., p.8

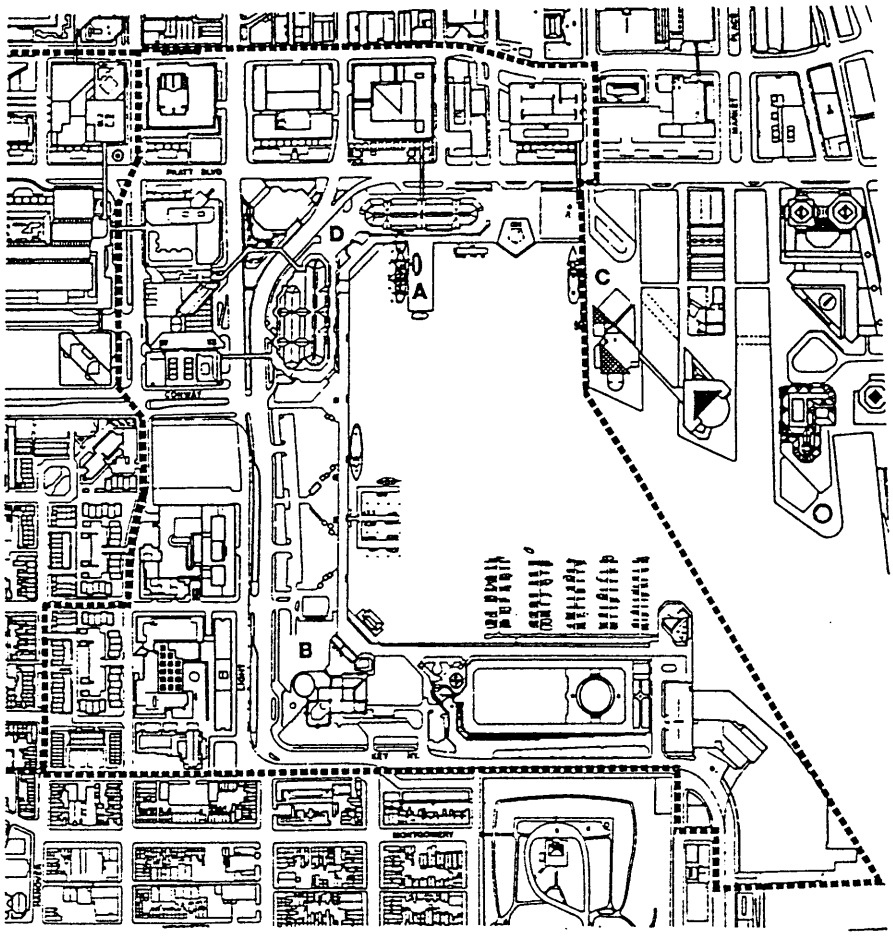

Figure 2.10
The Inner Harbor
(Baltimore Development Corporation)

west is Festival Hall, a 52,000 SF movable structure designed to host community and cultural exhibitions (Figure 2.8, B). In addition to existing activities, future development within Inner Harbor West will ultimately occupy the four parcels immediately adjacent to the ball park site (Figure 2.8, lots 1-3) and the current Festival Hall site).

To the east of the Inner Harbor West is the city's much heralded Inner Harbor, the jewel of Baltimore's 1964 30-year City Redevelopment Plan (Figure 2.10). Covering three sides of the basin, the objective of the joint public-private venture was to recapture the water as a public amenity, and to turn the harbor into a playground for Baltimoreans.[7] The

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[7]Wrenn, Douglas M.: Urban Waterfront Development, Urban Land Institute, Washington, DC, 1983, p. 149

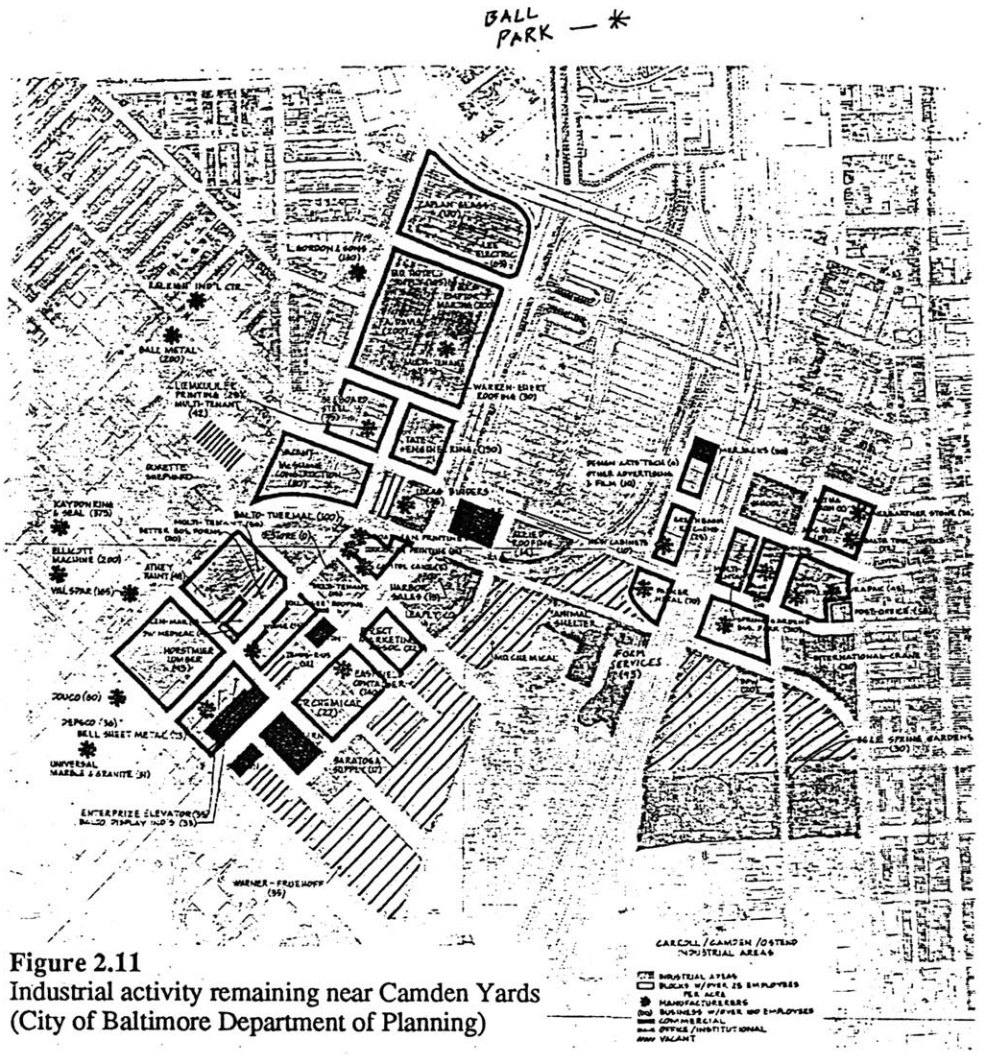

Figure 2.11
Industrial activity remaining near Camden Yards
(City of Baltimore Department of Planning)

95 acre site has however, blossomed into a major tourist and regional commercial destination. By 1982, nearly 30 attractions had been included in the Inner Harbor's program, including U.S.F.*Constellation* , the oldest fighting warship in the navy; (Figure 2.10, A), the 200-foot steamer *Nobska*; the Maryland Science Center (Figure 2.4, B), which includes a 150 seat planetarium and 400 -seat IMAX theater; and the National Aquarium in Baltimore (Figure 2.10, C), which sees over 1 million visitors annually.[8]

[8]Wrenn, p 150

The Inner Harbor is also home to Harborplace (Figure 2.10, D), a 250,000 SF collection of specialty retail, restaurants, and food oriented merchants. Located strategically a the northwest hub of the Inner Harbor, Harborplace is able to boast a maritime theme while connecting to the adjacent downtown office district and Convention Center.

Surrounding the southern portion of Camden Yards are industrial lands remnant of the 1970 Camden Industrial Park plan (Figure 2.11). This is a particularly intensive industrial area, characterized by traditional medium-sized manufacturing firms and by such CBD-oriented industries as elevator service and restaurant supply,[9] and currently employs 5,500 persons.[10]

Elements of the Camden Yards Project

The Camden Yards sports complex is comprised of several features (Figure 2.12). In addition to the ballpark (Oriole Park), Camden Station and Warehouse have been retained. The complex also consists of a rail platform adjacent to the east of the warehouse, and a 5,000 car parking lot south of Martin Luther King Boulevard.

In examining the physical qualities of the complex, it is clear that every element of its design and planning was guided by fundamental principles of sensitivity for and responsiveness to the site's physical and historical context -best evidenced in the shape of the ballpark (Figure 2.13). In respecting the close confines that define the urban environment, designers shaped the park as they would most urban buildings: first in respect of the existing boundaries imposed by the urban fabric and only then in response to internal requirements. Thus, like the ballparks of the early century, Oriole Park's configuration is defined by adjacent roadways (Camden Street and Russell Street). But unique to this ballpark is the restriction imposed by the Camden Warehouse on the eastern edge of the park. While planners did consider demolishing the warehouse, to leave it in

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[9]Baltimore City Department of Planning: Draft: Strategies for the Middle Branch Industrial Areas, August 31, 1990 p.8

[10]Baltimore City Department of Planning, August 31, 1990, p.8

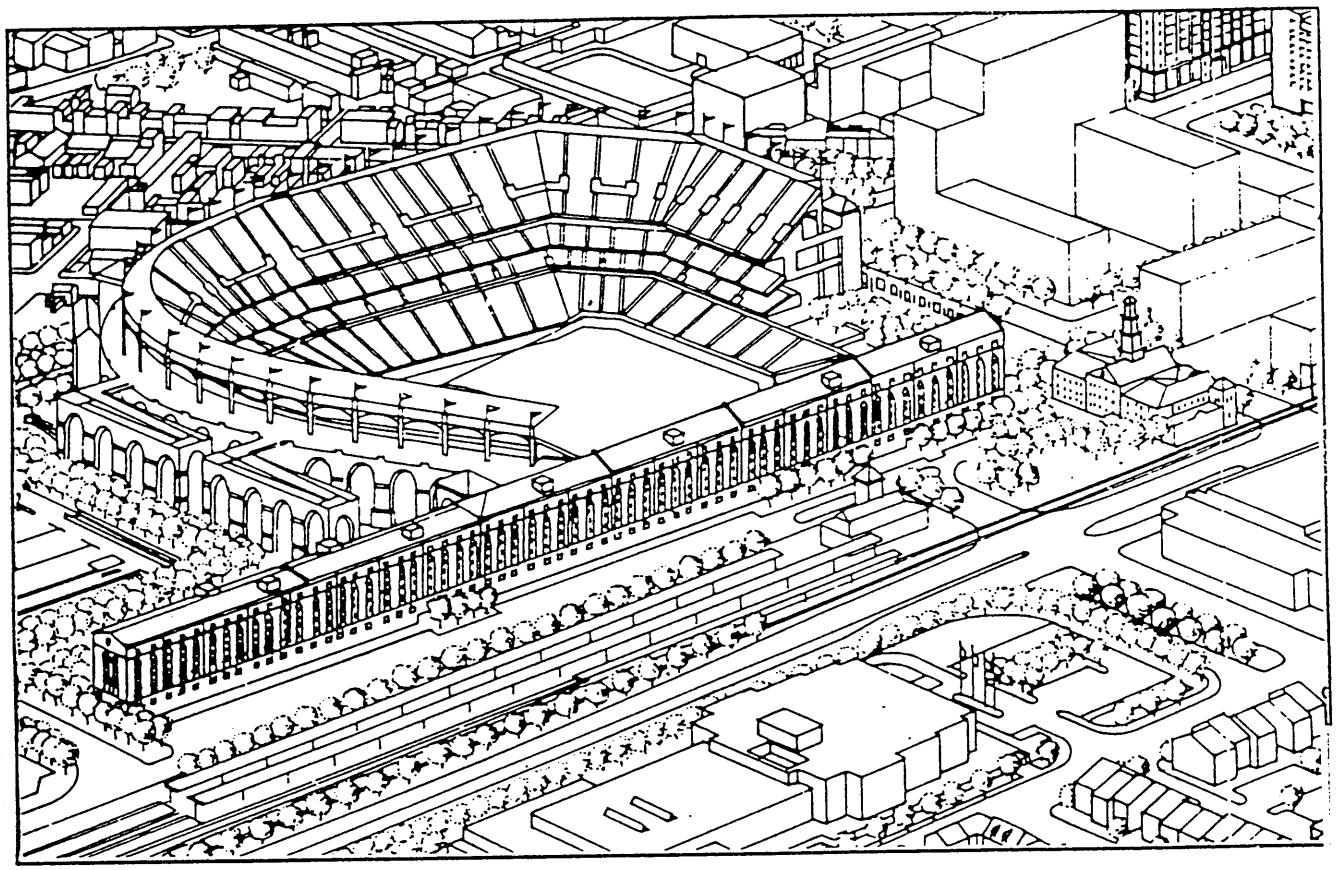

Figure 2.12
Oriole Park at Camden Yards
(Maryland Stadium Authority & Department of Transportation

place they concluded, would testify to the ballpark's sensitivity and would ensure a Golden Age-like idiosyncracy.

The ballpark's designers also gave considerable attention to the question of how its external appearance might respond to the site's history and how it help mitigate impacts of scale. In the spirit of the Golden Age ballparks, they designed extensive pedestrian-scale details for the structure's facade; the result being, in some critic's view, a stadium that looks like a local building (Figures 2.13 & 2.14).[11] The ballpark boasts a masonry skin punctured with arched openings, reflective of the area warehouse vernacular, that wrap around even the typically ominous switch-back ramps. (Figure 2.15). The nostalgic sense of the exterior is further enhanced by cornice lines and step-backs -applied in an effort to

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[11] Goldberger, Michael: "A Radical Idea: Baseball as It Used to Be." The New York Times, Sept. 19, 1989, p. H3

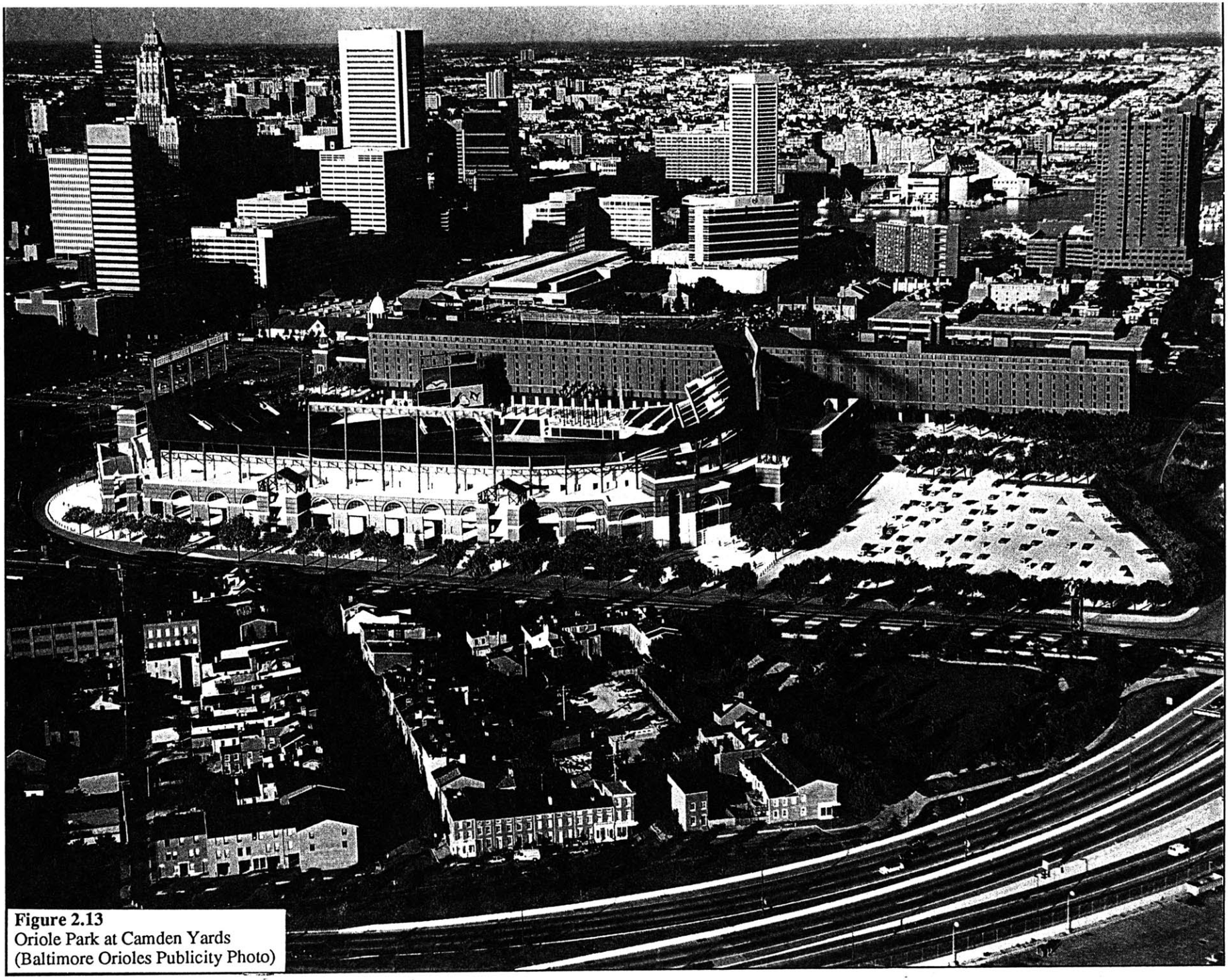

Figure 2.13
Oriole Park at Camden Yards
(Baltimore Orioles Publicity Photo)

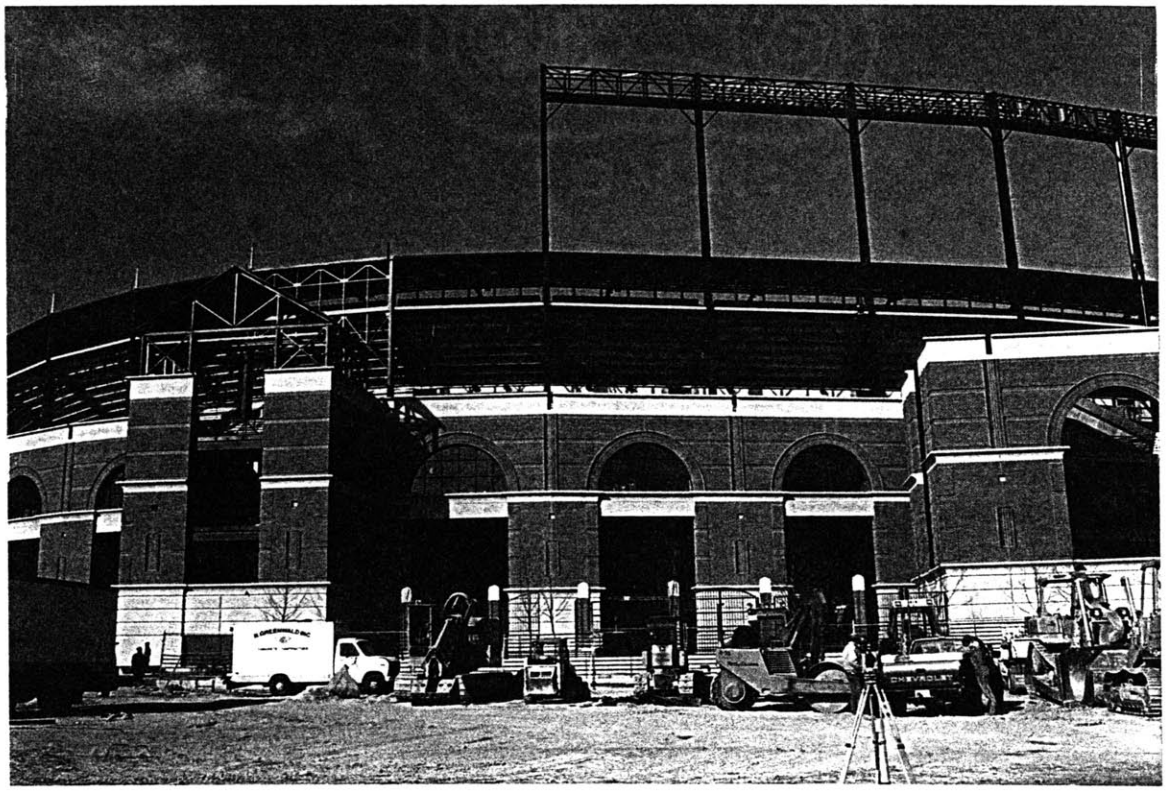

Figure 2.14
Oriole Park's King Boulevard elevation
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

relate the ballpark to the smaller scale neighborhood buildings- and by the exposed green steel lattice-work.[12]. Indeed, in looking at the ball park one is impressed by its modesty relative to stadia of the past decades.

In addition to a sensitive architectural approach, Oriole Park's designers followed a fundamental set of urban design principles; implemented to ensure that the ballpark respond to the unique opportunities provided by the urban site, and to create a sense of connection between the ball park and the city. Some of these guidelines are in response to the ballparks siting within a tight urban street grid. Within the site, the ball park was located along its northern-most edge for example, in order that it define street edges along Camden and

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[12]Smith, Janet-Marie; Vice President of Stadium Planning and Development, The Baltimore Orioles, Inc., Conversation, January 23, 1991

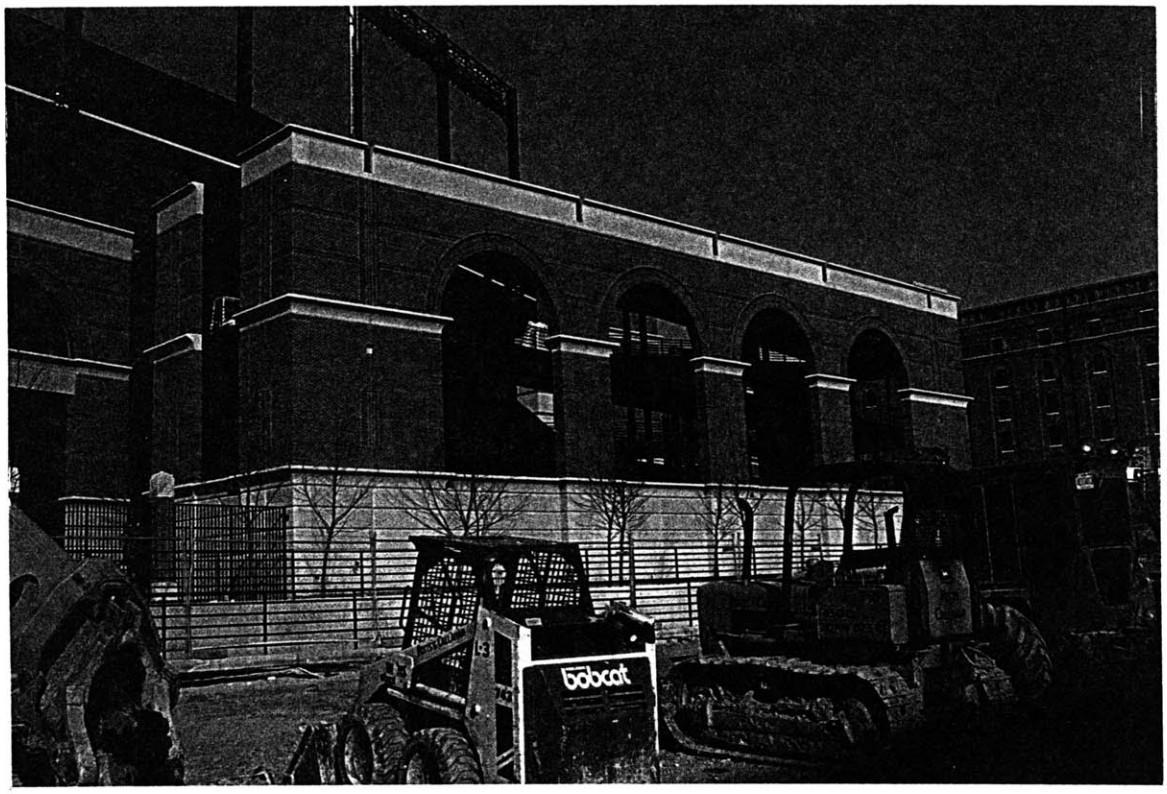


Figure 2.15
Oriole Park's switchback ramps are hidden beneath its facade
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

Figure 2.16
Oriole Park's streetwall along Camden Street
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

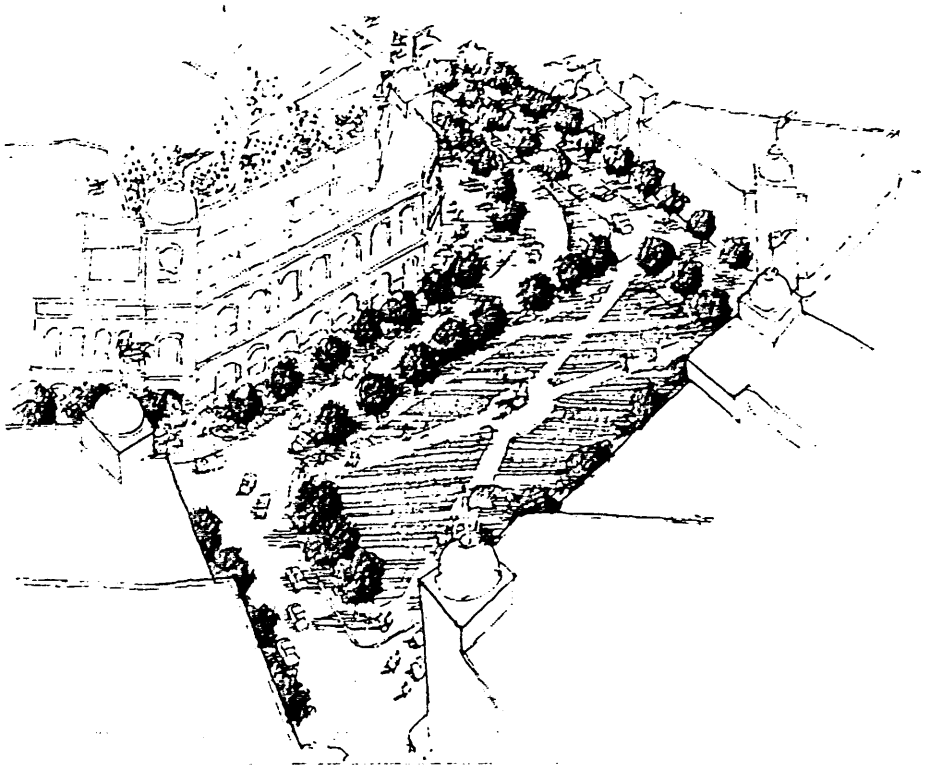


Figure 2.17
Proposal for a public Square at Russell and Camden Streets
(RTKL Associates, Inc.)

Russell Streets (Figure 2.16), and reinforce the sense of open space at the intersection of the two streets (Figure 2.17).

Other principles designed the help the ball park responds to the street fabric include providing signature elements at points where the ball park terminates view corridors (Figure 2.18), and respecting and maintaining the Eutaw Street corridor on site (Figure 2.19). This pedestrian concourse is a key element of the project, as it helps to softens the distinction between city and stadium site.

The molding of the ballpark in response to it surroundings is further reflected in the park's internal character. Indeed, Oriole Park has many of the quirky features common to the 70 year-old, tight-fit ballparks. These including narrow foul territories, a playing field that is asymmetrical and an outfield wall that, in response, varies in height, and the wrapping of all bleacher levels around only one foul pole. All of these features serve to remind fans of the urban environmental constraints to which the ballpark is subject.

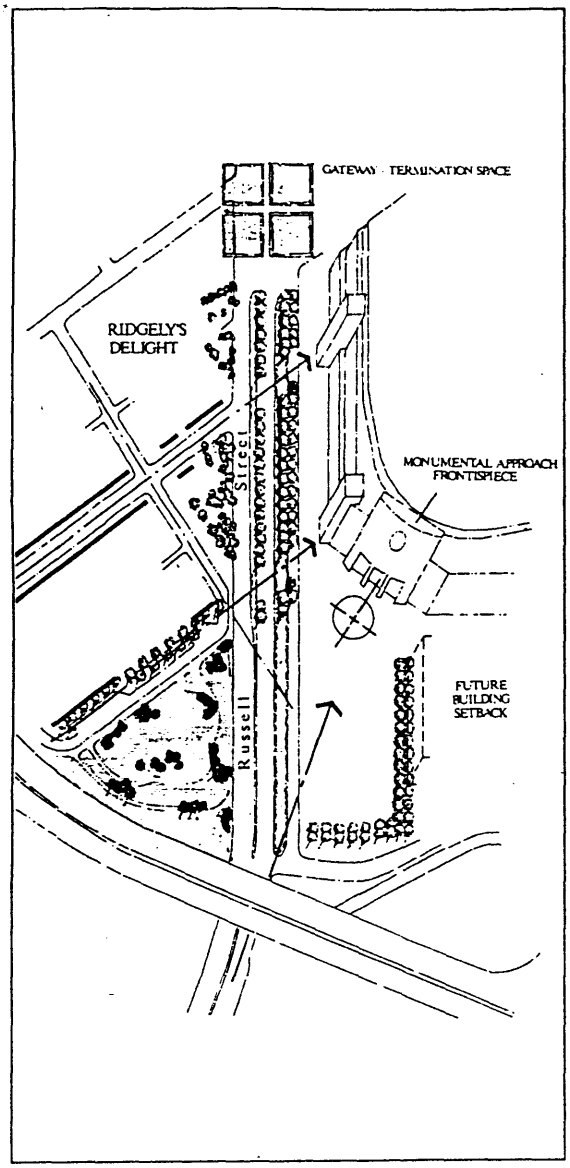


Figure 2.18
Signature details are used to terminate views
(RTKL Associates, Inc.)

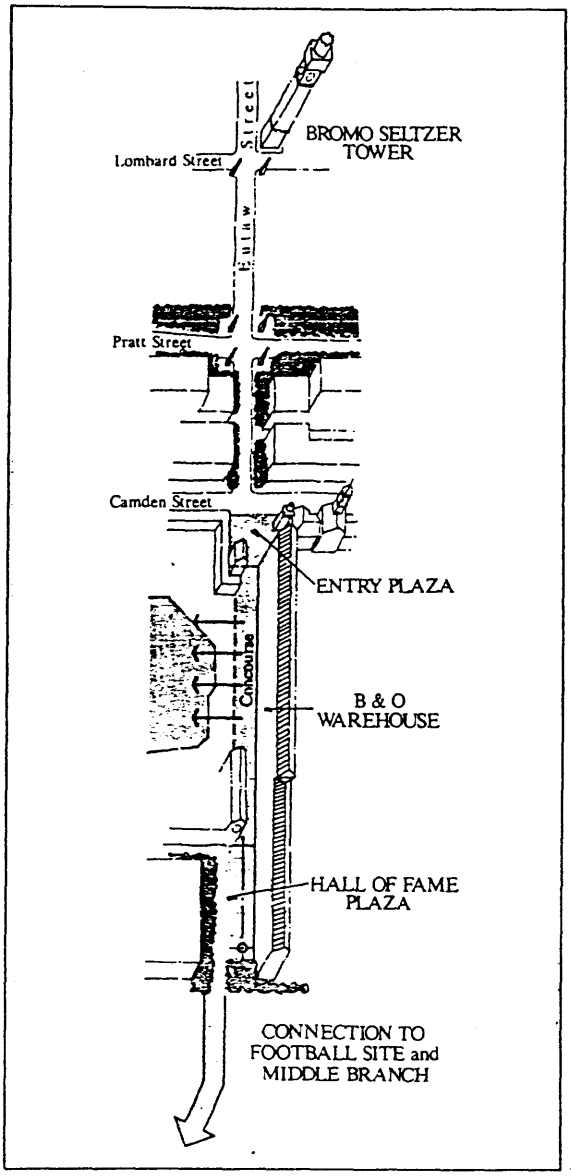


Figure 2.19
Eutaw Street concourse
(RTKL Associates, Inc.)

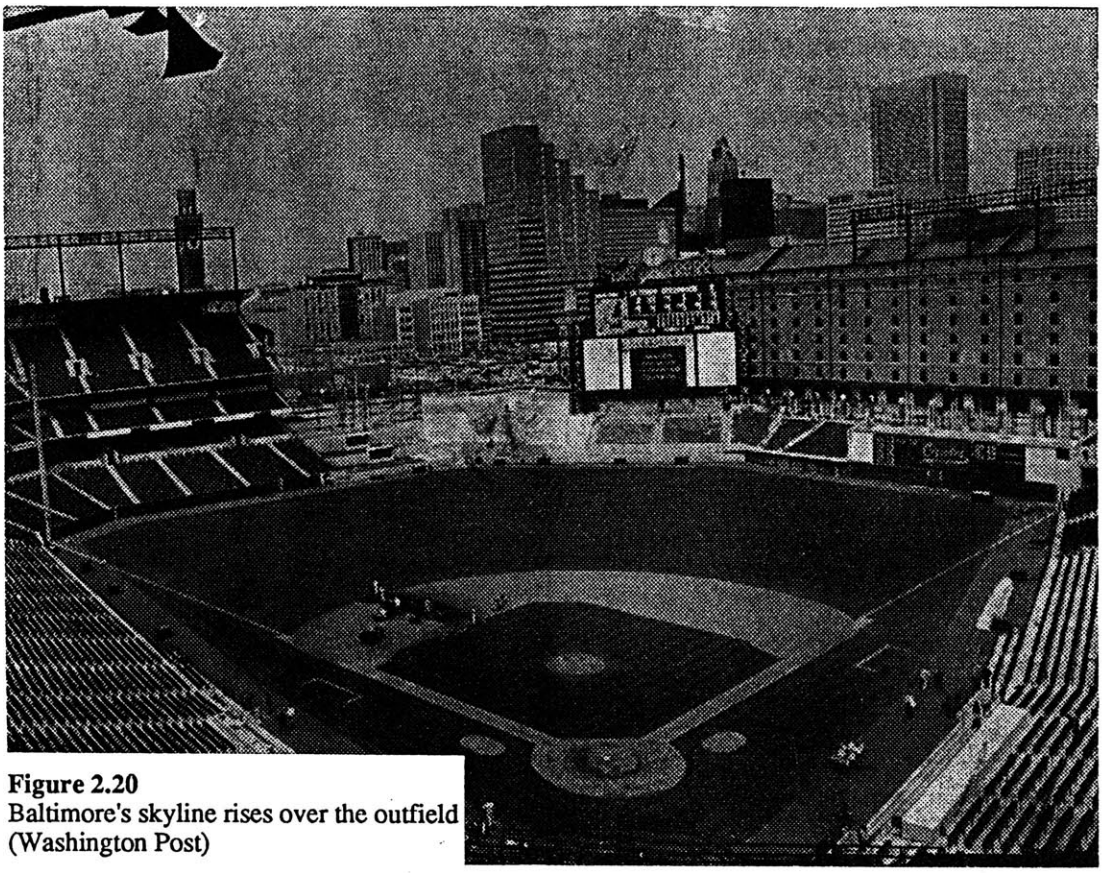


Figure 2.20
Baltimore's skyline rises over the outfield
(Washington Post)

Perhaps the most awesome aspect of the fan experience will be the view beyond the outfield (Figure 2.20). Immediately past the right field wall looms the warehouse, and beyond it the skyline of downtown Baltimore -like its Golden Age predecessors, forging a visual connection that will further distinguish the ballpark as a unique, urban place.

Although the stadium's planners have devoted a great deal of attention on the aesthetic and physical responsiveness of the Camden Yards complex to its environment, so too have they focused on how the facility could be functionally integrated into the urban context. While the warehouse, for example, was retained to define both internal and external appeal of Oriole Park, its program of uses will serve to blur the distinction between the site and the city. The Eutaw Street corridor separating the ballpark and warehouse will open outside of event times in order to give the public access to the warehouse's ground floor commercial uses and top-floor dining area; thus giving the site a life beyond the ballpark's scheduled

Figure 2.21
Eutaw Street corridor, the ballpark on the left, Camden Warehouse on the right
(RTKL Associates, Inc.)

Figure 2.22
Platforms for commuter rail and Baltimore's new LRT
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

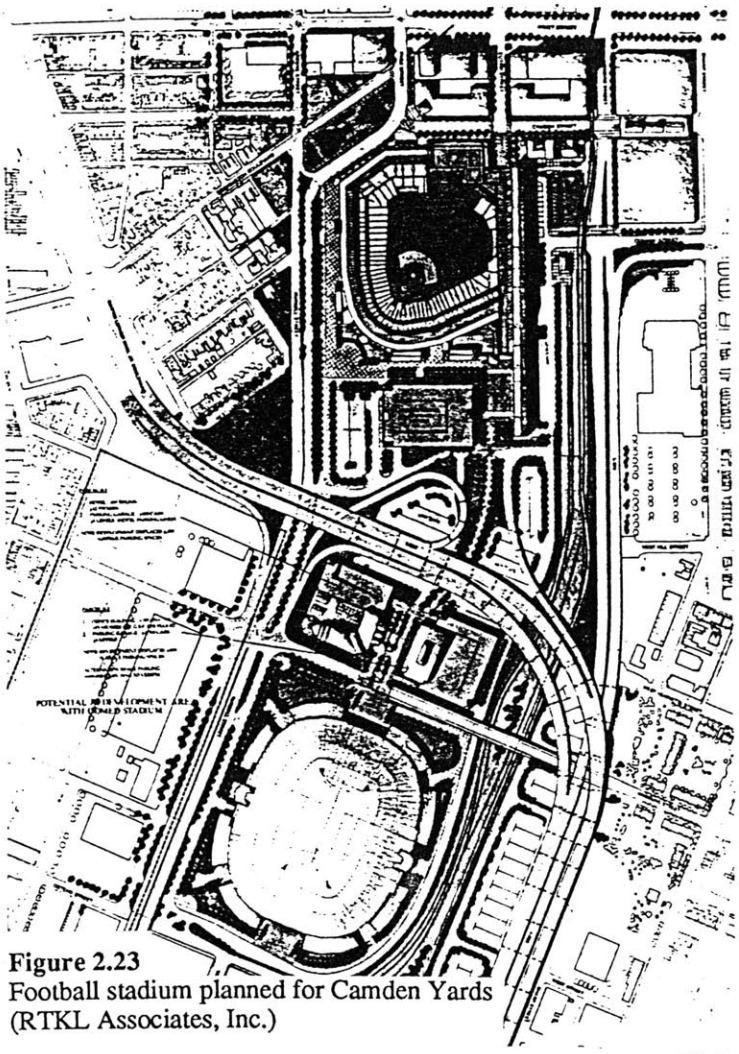
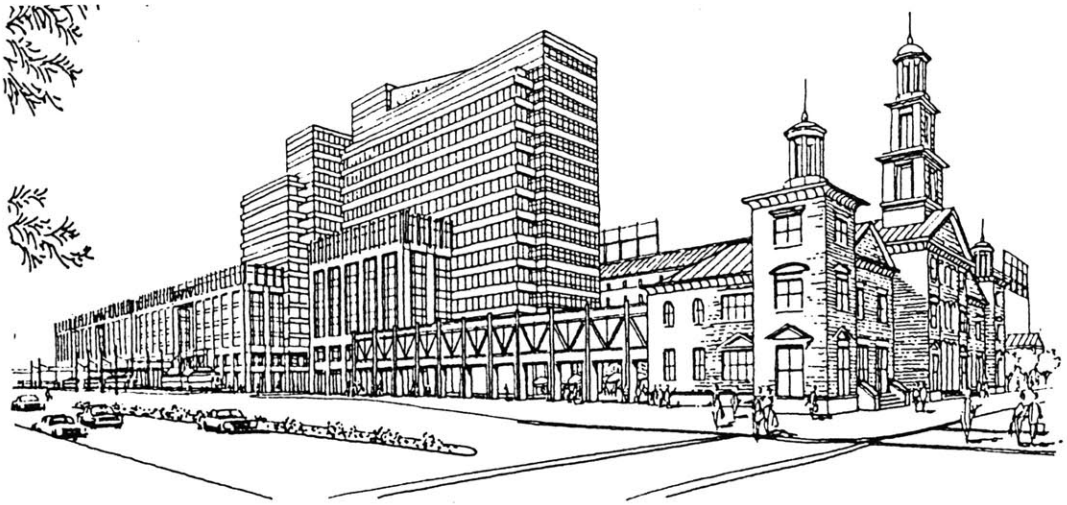


Figure 2.23
Football stadium planned for Camden Yards
(RTKL Associates, Inc.)

Figure 2.24
Conceptual drawing of air rights development over Camden Yards' rail platforms
(Ayers/Saint/Gross, Inc.)



events (Figure 2.21). The warehouse also links functionally to the downtown by providing nearly 400,000 SF of office space.

The functional relationship between the stadium site and the city is further established with the on-site provision of transportation facilities (Figure 2.22). East of the warehouse is a rail platform that as the terminus for the Baltimore-Washington commuter train and as a stop along the city's new light-rail transit (LRT). Clearly, these facilities enhance the accessibility of the site for the city and region, but will also form the front door for city visitors, and will be used heavily by the traveling to and from the nearby CBD.

While the planning and design of the baseball park, warehouse, and transportation facilities comprise a substantial undertaking, they only represent the first phase of the Camden Yards project. Conditional plans have also been laid for a football stadium that will be constructed on the south of Martin Luther King Boulevard if the city is awarded a football franchise (Figure 2.23). There are also plans for air-rights development over the rail platforms east of the warehouse (Figure 2.24).

The People Involved in the Camden Yards Project

The person most directly responsible for the construction of a new stadium in Baltimore was the late Edward Bennett Williams, former owner of the Baltimore Orioles. In 1986, at the end of a three year lease for the thirty year old Memorial Stadium, Williams announced that he would only continue to sign leases for the facility on a year-to-year basis. This meant that he, or whoever might subsequently own the team would have the option of moving the team to another city without penalty.

Thus, like so many American sports franchise owners before him, Williams was able to parlay the fears of losing the Orioles into a new facility. With the precedent of publicly funded sports franchises firmly in place, the onus was put to the State Government and Governor William Donnell Schaeffer to build a new stadium. They responded by

voting to fund a project through the issuance of $155 million in taxable and tax-exempt revenue bonds and through the use of $50 million worth of state lottery funds. They also created the Maryland Stadium Authority (the MSA), who's sole mission would be to guide planning and construction of the professional sports facilities they deemed necessary for metropolitan Baltimore.

While it was Williams who forced the construction of the new stadium, it was the teams subsequent owner, Eli Jacobs who would determine stadium's aesthetic. After buying into Williams' agreement for an outdoor, baseball-only facility, Jacobs, who has a strong affinity for urban design issues, was concerned as much about the stadium's design as he was about its function, and was determined to ensure that a decidedly traditional, urban ballpark be built. Jacobs thus hired urban designer Janet-Marie Smith, charging here with representing the franchises position in collaborating with the Stadium Authority and with the project architects, Hellmuth, Obata, and Kassabaum, Inc. Indeed, Smith would be the force behind the ballparks design; applying Jacobs principals to decisions ranging from seat color to the use of a steel superstructure (as opposed to reinforced concrete). "Janet-Marie Smith has, more than anyone, determined what the stadium is going to look like."[13]

Motivation: Why the Stadium was Built

The fundamental impetus behind the construction of Baltimore's new stadium was a fear that the city would otherwise lose the team. Williams decision to sign leases on an annual basis was an ultimatum to the City and State: Memorial Stadium was no longer an acceptable long term home for his franchise, and he wished to reserve the option of relocating to the most suitable alternative, whether or not it be in Baltimore.

In order to truly appreciate its strength and significance though, one must put William's threat in historical perspective. The City and State's politicians, sports

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[13]Paull, Evans, Executive Planner, Strategic Planning Division, The City of Baltimore Planning and Development Department, Conversation, Jan. 23, 1992

enthusiasts, and business community were still reeling from two very similar loses. Immediately after the sports media crowned Baltimore the "City of Champions", the city was jolted by the departure of the National Basketball Association's Baltimore Bullets following their 1970 championship season. The loss was a disappointment in its own right, but of equal importance to the city and state leaders was the precedent that the move set for the remaining two franchises, the football Colts and baseball Orioles. The community thus perceived a need to ensure that their two remaining professional franchises, the football Colts and baseball Orioles, were satisfied with their facilities.

To this end, in 1972 the State Legislature created the Maryland Sports Complex Authority, to which it gave the task of assessing whether Baltimore needed a new stadium and, if so, what would be the optimal type and location. The Stadium Authority's findings reaffirmed the fears of the business community: if something was not done to upgrade the city's professional sports facilities, they stood to lose another of its two remaining professional franchises. Their recommendation to build a new domed stadium complex was, however, never acted upon; and indeed their concerns would be realized a decade later. With no concerted efforts to build a stadium in Baltimore following the Sports Complex Authority's recommendation, Robert Irsay, owner of the Colts, moved the team in 1984 into an new domed stadium in Indianapolis.

Thus within 15 years the City of Baltimore had lost two of its three franchises-the loss of only one being an unpleasant stigma for any city. "Rightly or wrongly, it's in a lot of people's minds, that 'because the largest and most successful cities have pro-sports teams, if you don't have them, then that makes you a notch below'".[14] Not surprisingly, the loss of the Colts triggered numerous stadium studies in response to fears of losing the one remaining franchise, the Orioles. Study groups included the Memorial Stadium Modernization Committee, the Maryland Sports Advisory Commission on Professional

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[14]Cline, conversation, 1992

Sports and the Economy, and the Baltimore Corporate Task Force.[15] While each group sought to propose the optimal solution, they reached quite disparate recommendations concerning the type of stadium that ought to be built, its location -and whether a new stadium should even be built. The stadium planning efforts were numerous, but suffered from a lack of focus.[16] Williams thus quickly brought attention and a need for focus by giving credence to city and state's fear of losing its third and sole remaining team.

The fundamental question therefore facing the MSA was what type of facility (or facilities) to build. Although there were potentially two tenants to serve (depending on whether the city was awarded a football franchise by the NFL), the notion of a dual purpose stadium was not attractive. As pointed out by Edward Cline, Deputy Director of the Maryland Stadium Authority (and as mentioned in Chapter 1), dual-purpose stadia barely 20 years old were proving unsatisfactory for tenants -particularly football clubs.

Furthermore, Cline adds, it made little sense to spend money on a more expensive dual purpose stadium (relative to a baseball-only facility) when the city wasn't assured of having a football team. In assessing the costs and benefits of building a multi-purpose stadium, consultants to the Stadium Authority concluded that of the estimated $175 million cost of a multi-purpose stadium, roughly $41 million would be associated with ensuring the stadium's dual-tenancy capabilities.[17] This money would be wasted were the city not awarded a football franchise in the future; a likely outcome given the mentioned dissatisfaction of football franchises with dual-purpose stadia. On the other hand, two stadia (the football stadium being built only after a franchise was awarded to Baltimore) could be built for $11,755,000 over the cost of a dual purpose stadium- a fraction of the $41 million that would be wasted on a dual purpose stadium were a football team not to

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[15]Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co., American Sports Associates, URS Corporation: Volume 1: Report on Phase 2, Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co. , Feb. 2, 1987, p.1-2

[16]Cline Edward, Deputy Director, Maryland Stadium Authority, conversation, Jan. 22, 1992

[17]Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co. et al.,Feb. 2, 1987, p.23

locate there.[18] As Cline views it then, "if [the Stadium Authority] built a baseball stadium and never got football, then we were really saving money."[19]

Ultimately, the Stadium Authority decided that separate football and baseball facilities be constructed. Doing so would most likely ensure that their two objectives -of providing a satisfactory, long-term home for the Orioles, and of providing a facility most likely to attract a football franchise- would be achieved.

Factors Behind the Decision to Locate Downtown

In addition to deciding the type -indeed types- of facilities to be built, the Maryland Stadium Authority reviewed host of site suitability analyses conducted during previous stadium initiatives in efforts to determine the optimal location for the state's complex. From these reports, three sites stood out to the Stadium Authority as the leading candidates (in addition to the existing Memorial Stadium). These included two suburban sites (Figure 2.25) Nursery Road, Landsdowne, and the Camden Yards site adjacent to the Central Business District. Ultimately, there were several key areas of concern in which -perhaps surprisingly- Camden Yards was decisively more attractive that the suburban locations.

Vehicular Access

In reviewing the materials used by the Maryland Stadium Authority in its evaluation of stadium alternatives, it seems clear -though perhaps surprising- that the Camden Yards site was the most attractive of the alternatives with regards to vehicular access. In terms of costs, logistics of implementation, and regional impacts, the existing vehicular infrastructure made the site in the opinion of the Stadium Authority, the most logical location for a stadium.

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[18]Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co. et al., Feb. 2, 1987,p. 1

[19]Cline, conversation, 1992

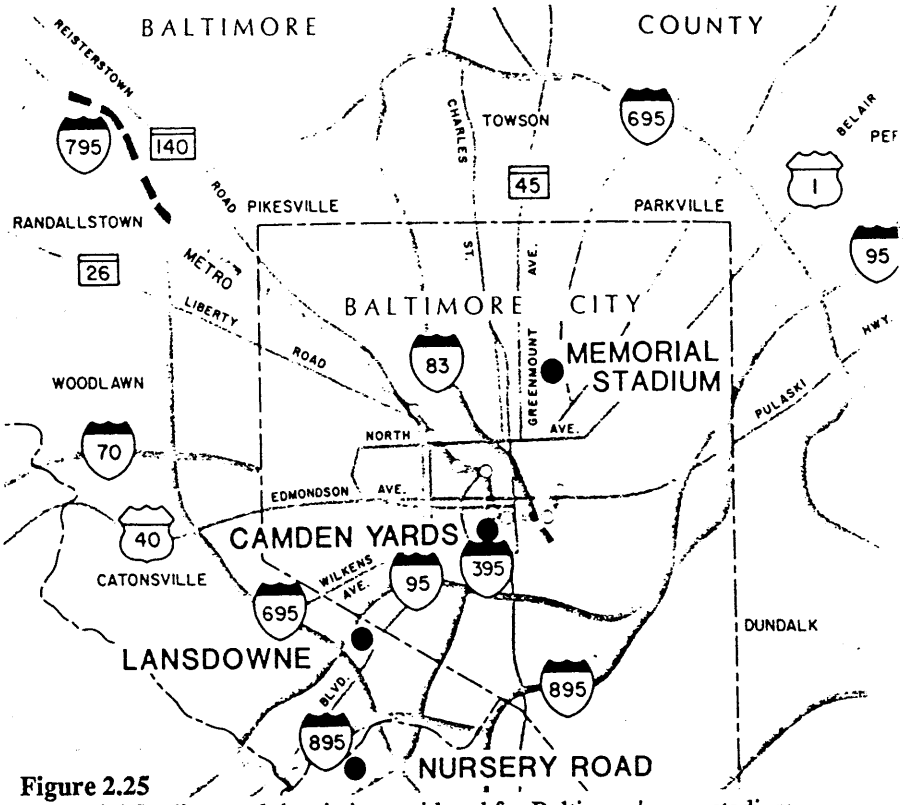

Figure 2.25
Memorial Stadium and the site's considered for Baltimore's new stadium
(Rummel, Klepper & Kahl)

Of the sites given serious consideration by the Stadium Authority, the Nursery Road site perhaps most typifies the traditional suburban site. In addition to its central location relative to the regional market (that includes Washington, DC to the south), the site was undeveloped, on the fringe of residential development, bound by a state 4-lane highway, and near an intersection of two Interstate freeways. Data reported by the Department of Transportation, however, suggests that the site is deceptive with regards to its actual accessibility. Twenty major off-site access improvements that would have been required in order to provide truly sufficient access to the site. The scale of these improvements s would have covered the spectrum, from $60,000 road widenings to $3.6 million road realignments, and would have totaled (in 1986) $32 million. In addition, estimates of the Nursery Road access improvements were predicated on Interstate improvements that were deemed necessary -regardless of the stadium's construction- but

would be mandatory if a stadium were to be located on the site. These improvements would have cost an estimated $120 million.[20]

An examination of the analysis of the other suburban site, Landsdowne brings similar findings. Although the site is located near two freeways (again a seemingly ideal scenario), extensive off site improvements totaling $25 million would have been necessary to prepare the site for such intense usage as a stadium. Furthermore, the $120 million in needed Interstate improvements would also have been required prior to construction a stadium in this location[21].

While these costs might be rationalized by considering the scale and type of facility being sited, an analysis of similar estimates for Camden Yards reveals quite different findings. And it is here that we first encounter a recurring theme in the site selection process: because of its central location, Camden Yards already had much of the needed infrastructure in place that, according to the Maryland Stadium Authority would be required to support a major stadium, including proximity to a major highway. Two stadium studies, the DOT analysis, and the New Stadium Site Evaluation[22] (conducted two years earlier) concluded that eight off-site access improvements would be required in order to properly service a stadium at the Camden Yards site, at estimated costs of $15.8 million and $13 million respectively[23].

As with the suburban sites given consideration, estimates of Camden Yards access upgrades also assumed implementation of improvements deemed necessary independent of the stadium. In the Camden Yards case however, these costs were estimated to be minimal: expansion of Interstate 95, passing near the site, to four lanes (within the existing right of

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[20]Rummel, Klepper & Kahl (RKK), The Wilson T. Ballard Company; JHK & Associates: Baltimore Stadium Access Study,Prepared for the Maryland Department of Transporation, Nov. 14, 1986 , p. H-2

[21]RKK, p. s-1

[22]RKK, p.s-1

[23]RKK, p s-1

way) for $2 million, and reconstruction of two vehicular overpasses traversing the site at an estimated cost of $10 million.

This discrepancy in scope, scale and cost of required improvements between the downtown and suburban alternatives would, according to Mr. Cline of the Stadium Authority, *the* crucial factor in the final site selection.[24]

Site options also diferred with respect to anticipaated returns on investment. Improvements at both the Landsdowne and Nursery Road site would have taken 10 years according to DOT estimates.[25] At the earliest then (given the 1986 completion of the cited site evaluations) the improvements would have been competed by 1996 -four years after the target date for the opening of the new stadium. Furthermore, it was the opinion of the Secretary of Transportation that "the local highways would not operate at an acceptable level of service between the stadium completion date and the mid- 1990's."[26] In fact, the realities of acquiring both community and Federal Highway Administration approval for these improvements would have undoubtedly delayed their implementation by at least a decade -if not permanently- given the staunch opposition to widening of the suburban-area highways and to private access from Federal highways, respectively.

Along with questions of when upgrades would pay off are questions as regarding who they would actually benefit. The costly access improvements to remote suburban sites would have little utility for anyone other than stadium patrons. The DOT report even suggested that improvements to the Nursery road and Landsdowne site would likely be closed outside of stadium event times.[27] As state and federally funded capital projects, these investments would have represented a public investment into facilities providing only a semi-public service -that is, to stadium-patrons. Conversely, the less costly

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[24]Cline, conversation, 1992

[25]Hellmuth, W.K.: Letter to H.J. Belgrad, Chairman of the Maryland Stadium Authority, November 14, 1986. In Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co., American Sports Associates, URS Corporation : Report on Phase 1: Evaluation of Stadium Site and Design Alternatives , Peat Marwick, Mitchell & Company Dec. 1, 1986 p. 5

[26]Hellmuth, W.K, Exhibit 2, p.5

[27]RKK, p. 2

improvements for Camden Yards would also benefit stadium patrons[28] but, in many cases would also benefit the general public; since many of the poposed improvements were merely upgrades of facilities used by thousands of drivers every day.

The Camden Yards site also presents advantages over the two suburban sites when examined at a regional scale. According to data supplied in the DOT study, suburban sites would have put a much larger strain on the surrounding freeways system. In both cases, 96% of all stadium traffic would use the highways. Only 68% of all vehicles, it was estimated, would arrive at Camden Yards via the freeway system. This difference is attributable to the grid of primary streets surrounding and leading from the site that would be used, according to DOT data, by a large proportion of patrons in direct routes to and from the stadium. Furthermore, stadium events will rarely be scheduled for times other than week nights and week-ends -on average once a year. The likelihood that stadium traffic will coincide with local peak flows is low, while on the other hand -as Edward Cline pointed out- a circulation network designed to handle hundreds of thousands of commuters daily will be available for stadium patrons.

The issue of background traffic also emerges at a regional level of analysis- everyday roadway traffic unaffiliated with stadium events that may be potentially disrupted by the stadium's traffic. As Interstate 95 is one of the most heavily traveled highways in the nation, minimizing the impact on traffic traveling through Baltimore on the highway is essential. While all three sites were predicted to have impacts on I-95 through traffic, Camden Yards is the most logical stadium site in this regard because it lies within the city's network of Interstate by-passes (See Figure 2.25). This by-pass would therefore continue to provide Interstate 95 traffic with an opportunity to avoid stadium traffic, while "no alternative routes would have been available" for the suburban sites given their location on the by-pass.[29]

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[28]RKK, p.2
[29]RKK, p. s-1

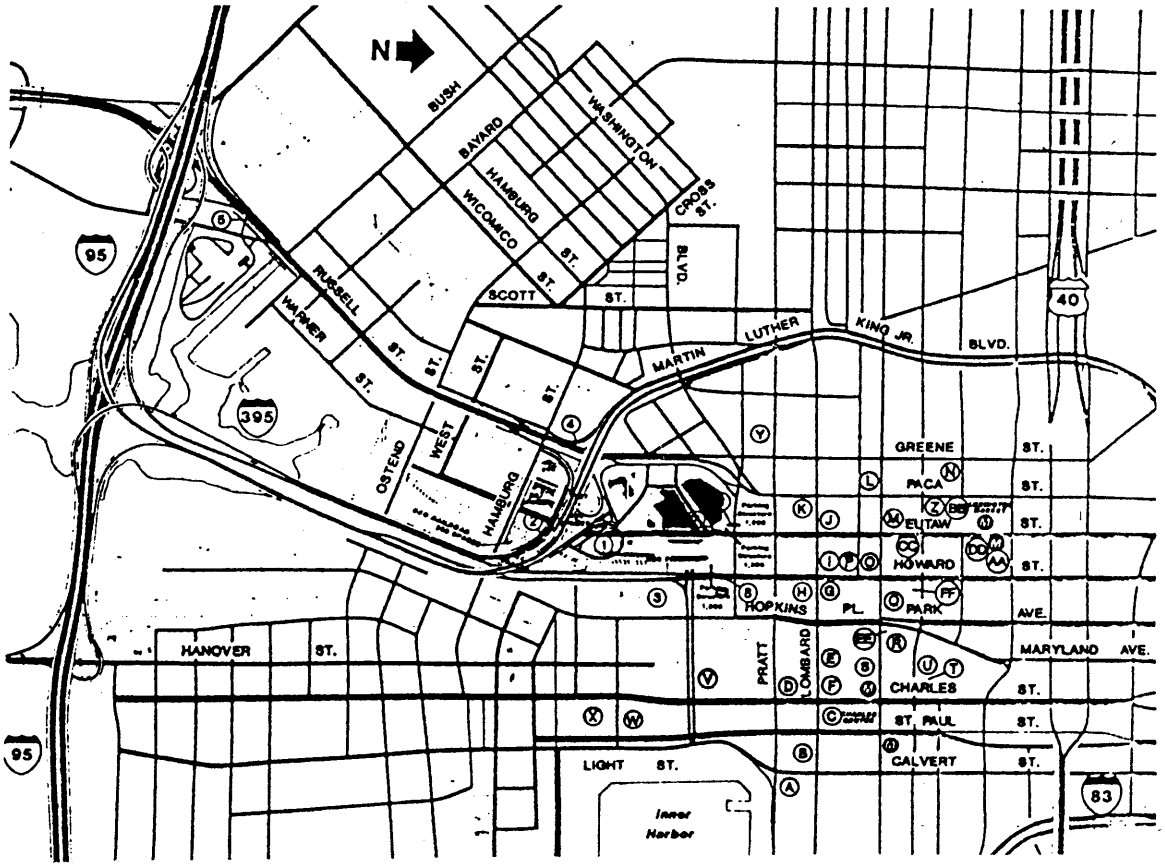

Figure 2.26
Parking Garages in Baltimore's CBD within 7 blocks of Oriole Park
(Rummel, Klepper & Kahl)

Parking

In considering possible sites for a stadium, and concern that goes had-in-hand with access is that of parking. And as was the case with access, consultants with the Stadium Authority concluded that locating the stadium at the Camden Yards site would provide the most attractive parking opportunities.

This conclusion was based on the fact that the city's Central Business District already possessed sufficient parking -in addition to circulation- within the immediate vicinity of the site to support a stadium.[30] Studies concluded that 32 off street parking

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[30]Peat Marwick et al, Dec. 1, 1986, p. 40

facilities (labeled A through FF in Figure 2.26) within seven blocks of the site would provide sufficient parking for any events held at the stadium.[31] Because, as mentioned previously, virtually all games can be scheduled for evenings and weekends, conflicts over parking between CBD workers and stadium patrons would be minimal. Indeed, this idea was not unprecedented, having been adopted successfully in the siting of other stadia. Managers of these downtown stadia reported to the Maryland Stadium Authority that the use of downtown parking by stadium patrons has not been problematic. Furthermore the use of downtown parking facilities by stadium patrons is advantageous for the city, as it represents an intensified use of existing land uses[32].

Functionally, the use of the existing, dispersed set of parking facilities was predicted to alleviate problems of "dump times". Dump times are defined by transportation planners as the time required for the last fan to leave the parking facility, and are used as a gauge of driver frustration, environmental degradation, and low fuel efficiency.[33] While each of the three stadium sites was predicted as encountering one hour dump times from the site,[34] consider that the suburban Landsdowne and Nursery Road sites were designed with a full allotment 14,000 spaces on site while Camden Yards would have roughly half this number. Thus, analyses showed that roughly 6,000 to 7,000 fewer cars (22,000 to 25,000 fewer fans*) would be waiting up to one hour to leave the Camden Yards site than the suburban sites -leaving instead, at an efficient rate from garages dispersed along the downtown road network[35].

Nevertheless, several studies concurred that, with regards to parking, Camden Yards represents a viable and efficient location for a major athletic facility.

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[31] RKK, p. F-3.

[32] Paul, Evans, Executive Planner, Strategic Planning Division, City of Baltimore, Conversation, January 21, 1992

[33] RKK, p. S-1

[34] RKK, p. S-1

* Using standard 3.5 patrons per car, 50,000 patrons at capacity

[35] Peat Marwick et al., Dec.1, 1986, p. 40

Alternative Modes of Access

In evaluating the site alternative, it was concluded that the accessibility awarded the downtown location also negated one of the major strengths of the suburban sites -regional accessibility. The primary tenant of the new facility, the Baltimore Orioles, have historically drawn upon regional support ; in 1985 54% of their fans were from outside the City of Baltimore, including 22% from metropolitan Washington, DC.[36] Although the suburban sites supposedly provided superior access for these fans, Orioles management concluded that the DC commuter link, as well as the "park & ride" lots at many of the suburban subway and light rail stations, would better serve their regional interests.

While existing parking and circulation provisions were significant factors in the Maryland Stadium Authority's decision to locate a stadium downtown, the most attractive element of the existing urban context was the network of centrally-oriented alternative modes of access. On the Camden Yards site was the terminus of the Maryland Transportation Authority (MTA) Washington-Baltimore commuter line as well as a proposed stop for the city's new light rail system. In addition, within six blocks of the stadium were two subway stops, and there was potential to re-route several radial bus routes to access the stadium. (A study undertaken subsequent to the site selection concluded that five routes could be re-routed to access the stadium directly, while 24 others would pass within walking distance of the site.[37])

The scope of transportation alternatives provided to downtown Baltimore and to the site were decisive for the obvious reason, according to Ed Cline, that fewer fans would travel to the site by car, leading to more efficient access and egress for fans.[38] This would be good for both the city and the stadium's business, as fans would not be forced to drive

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[36]RKK, Fig. c-1

[37]Magersupp, John, Chief Superintendent, Operations Planning, Maryland Transportation Authority, conversation, Jan. 23, 1992

[38]Cline, conversation, Jan. 21, 1992

and would not be deterred by inaccessibility or lack of mode access-egress alternatives. Although early analyses showed that Camden Yards could expect no advantage in modal split over suburban sites (80% of patrons using cars in each case), more recent studies have predicted that up to 30% of fans can be expected to access Camden Yards by alternative modes.[39]

Preconceptions

In addition to the technical findings that favored the Camden site, there appears to have been a long-standing bias towards the site, as issues of Baltimore's downtown redevelopment and stadium planning have never been totally independent. The relocation of the Bullets to suburban Washington for example was not simply a move to a more lucrative venue, but a rescue -in the franchises opinion- from an intolerable environment. "One of the main reasons they [moved]", according to Cline, "was because their customers didn't want to come to the Civic Center... A lot of people were afraid to come to downtown Baltimore."[40]

The loss of the Bullets was thus a statement about both poor playing facilities and the decline of the city center. The aforementioned study by the Maryland Sports Complex authority (that immediately followed the loss of the Bullets) consequently recommended that the much needed stadium be combined with a convention center facility, and be located downtown in the Camden Yards area ; the concept being that while the loss of sports franchise may have reflected the conditions downtown, a new complex "[could] be the centerpiece of redevelopment in the downtown area."[41]

Studies undertaken following the loss of the Colts also recommended that any new facility be constructed downtown; Figure 2.27 depicts a multi-purpose stadium proposed by the Baltimore Stadium Task Force in 1985. A precedent of thought therefore existed

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[39] Magersupp, conversation, 1992
[40] Cline, conversation, 1992
[41] Cline, conversation, 1992

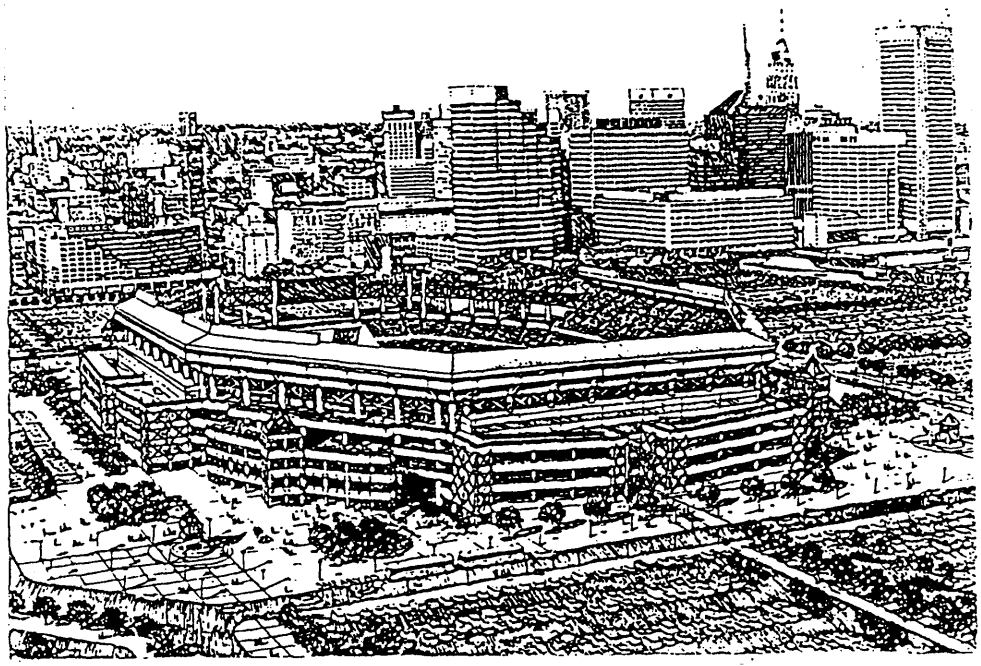

Figure 2.27
An early conception of a dual-purpose stadium for Camden Yards
(HOK Sports Facilities Group)

prior to the Maryland Stadium Authority's site selection that the stadium should be included as an element of any downtown redevelopment efforts. Nevertheless, the city has pursued and fulfilled -as mentioned- a rigorous redevelopment initiative independent of the state's reluctance to build a stadium. While a stadium was not an element of these projects, many believe that they now provide an excellent setting for a stadium.

Impacts of the Stadium

Although the stadium has been operating for less than a month, concerns have already been raised regarding the various types of impacsts Oriole Park will have on the residents of Baltimore.

Perhaps the most contentious issue in planning a stadium is its affect on the general quality of life for nearby residents. Planning and designing a stadium for an urban context is thus particularly challenging in this regard.

As has been noted, Oriole Park's designers have gone to great lengths to respond sensitively to the given context by relating the site both aesthetically and functionally to its

urban surroundings. Yet the ballpark also respects the proximity of the historic Otterbein and Ridgely's Delight neighborhoods with the inclusion of measures designed specifically to disassociate them from the park. The warehouse for instance, will act for Otterbein residents as a barrier to noise and light emanating from the stadium. Ridgely's Delight residents will benefit from an extensive redesign of Russell Street. In addition to the street's expansion to six lanes, landscape buffers on both sides of the road, a boulevard, and an on-site bus lane provide a formidable obstacle for stadium patrons. Evans Paull, planner for the City of Baltimore has pointed out that "in case they haven't gotten the message, we're also putting a short fence up" along the western edge of the street.[42]

Although, as mentioned, the selection of the downtown site was based largely on accessibility and parking advantages, there is potential for certain adverse impacts. Analyses, for example, have warned that failing to provide parking for stadium patrons in one specific location will inadvertently lead to driver confusion regarding destination.[43] Patrons will be uncertain as to which facilities will be full upon arrival; cross-site traffic will ultimately ensue as thousands of motorists criss-cross downtown searching for available parking.

A more specific problem for the Camden Yards site will be the decision to develop the 5,000 space on-site parking lot -in particular, to build a new football stadium in the near future (Figure 2.28). Preliminary plans suggest that multi-level structures can be built on-site in the remaining space, but they will undoubtedly house far less than 5,000 spaces and it is unclear how many more cars the existing parking in Baltimore's Central Business District is capable of absorbing.

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[42]Paul, Evans, conversation, January 20, 1992
[43]RKK, p. S-2

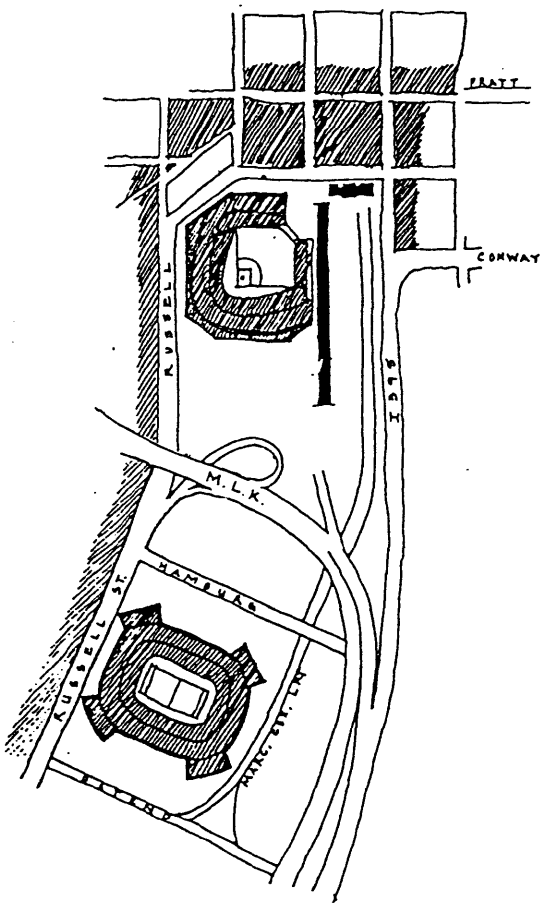

Figure 2.28
Future Camden Yards sports facilities tandem
(RTKL Associates, Inc.)

It is too early to determine what will be the ultimate economic impacts of the stadium, yet Baltimore city planner Evans Paull envisions two categories of "spin-off benefits" that will be captured by the city. The first type concern the added market for evening and weekend-oriented businesses, such as bars and restaurants. According to his estimates, and assuming that fan spending will be met entirely by new establishments, the new space required to serve stadium patrons would be roughly 52,000 square feet.[44] While the stadium may enhance the market for retail businesses in the area, Paull does not feel the impact is sufficient enough to warrant any alteration in the City's neighborhood redevelopment plans. In particular, the majority of land in the Market West urban renewal area is currently zoned medium and high density commercial development. "The densities

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[44]Paull, Evans: Memo: Stadium-Related Development, City of Baltimore Department of Planning, Sept. 26, 1988, p. 1

allowed [in the Market West neighborhood] are certainly more than what's necessary to accommodate any stadium-related development that we foresee. And they are zoned for anything you would want to put there."[45] The city therefore taken a laissez-faire position: they see no need to rethink the planning of Camden Yard's context in any comprehensive manner.

Rather, the City believes that the stadium will help in the achievement of the plan's objectives. Susan Eliasberg of the Baltimore Redevelopment Corporation feels that the stadium provides the market needed to "fill in" underdeveloped areas of the neighborhood.[46] Paull concurs, arguing that the area will attract investment as it now "lies along the beaten path" between the stadium and points north of the site, including a subway station.[47]

The second category of spin-offs from which Paull anticipates benefits are those associated with the ball park's contribution to a critical mass of visitor-oriented activity. While the city has rapidly transformed into a prominent tourist destination, it has not been able to reap the full benefits of the tourist industry as the majority of tourists coming to Baltimore do not stay overnight. The city has thus adopted a policy of attempting to add to the critical mass of activity around the Inner-Harbor in an effort to convince visitors to stay overnight. Officials believe that the stadium will prove a substantial addition to this critical mass. Specifically, if the stadium led to a 2% increase in the number of tourists that currently stay overnight, Paull estimates that the effect would be an increase in hotel demand of almost 200 rooms.[48]

In addtion to observed economic activity abd Paull's projectons, The Maryland Stadium Authority has forecasted the broad ranging and long-term economic benefits of their two-stadium sports complex. In addition to a "one-time" impact of nearly $259 million

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[45]Paul, Evans, conversation, January 20, 1992

[46]Dresser, Michael: "Businesses Catch Baseball Fever", The Baltimorte Sun, Jan. 18, 1992, p. 1F

[47]Paul, Evans, conversation, January 24, 1992

[48]Paull, Evans, p. 3

(representing activity associated with site preparation and facility design and constuction), the Stadium Authority study projects an annual impact of $78.6 million. Discounted over a 15 year period, the present value of the projects impacts is estimated at $1.1 billion.[49]

While the City and Stadium Authority are anticipating positive economic gains from the stadium, Paull suggests that they are also disappointed about its impact on the area's industry. The City values the industry in the area given that it is the city's most intensive industrial area and is easily accessible to the city's working class. Officials were therefore despondent over the Maryland Stadium Authority's decision to locate a 5,000 car surface parking lot on site; supporting instead a proposal that would have provided no parking south of Martin Luther King Boulevard and would have thus minimized the displacement of industry.

As it is, Paull estimates that the stadium project displaced 1155 industry-related jobs.[50] Although the Maryland Stadium Authority provided a relocation allowance, and most businesses were relocated within the city limits, Paull notes that relocation has nevertheless come at great expense to the city; in the form of favorable land write-downs and financing arrangements, and poor accessibility for employees.

A second, less direct impact on the area's remaining industry has been land speculation that has followed the ballpark's construction. Such patterns hinder the quality and viability of businesses because, as Paull points out "[they] start thinking 'hey, maybe I better not start investing in my property because in a couple of years, I might be able to sell it for a zillion dollars.'" Furthermore the trend leads owners to refrain from negotiating long term leases.[51]

How People Think about the Stadium and its Relation to Context

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[49]Peat Marwick, Mitchell, and Co.: Report on the Economic and Tax Impacts of the Camden Yards Stadium Development, March 24, 1987, p. 8

[50]Paul, Evans, conversation, January 20, 1992

[51]Paul, Evans, conversation, January 24, 1992

In evaluating the Camden Yards project, baseball and design enthusiasts seem to have reached a consensus that the baseball facility is nothing short of a Godsend. "Seldom does a building draw the kind of near unanimous raves that the city's new baseball park did after its design was unveiled."

Design critics are in awe of the ballparks urban character, particularly in comparison to its immediate predecessors; suggesting that "Oriole Park at Camden Yards demonstrates the often underestimated value of sensible land use planning combined with sensitive urban design and architecture."[52] Oriole Park at Camden Yards, according to design critic Paul Goldberger, "is capable of wiping out in a single gesture fifty years of wretched stadium design"[53] and thus has the potential to mark the birth of a new era in stadium planning.

Baseball aficionados and professionals hold Oriole Park in equally high regard. For them, the park's small scale park, quirky interior dimensions, and (relatively) intimate interior are a refreshing attempt to re-create the confines in which professional baseball was originally played. Upon seeing the ballpark's design, former baseball Commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti warned Orioles' management that "once you build this, every [other] team will want one just like it."[54]

It is in part the timing of the Oriole Park project that makes it exciting for baseball enthusiasts. With Chicago's old Comiskey Park demolished after eighty years of service, Yankee Stadium in the Bronx having been modernized "into something less than the house that Ruth built"[55], and discussions ongoing over the possible replacement of the remaining GoldenAge ballparks, Oriole Park gives hope that their legacy will not be totally forgotten.

Interestingly, those involved in the project view it in more modest terms. In pushing for a ballpark with traditional character, Eli Jacobs and Janet-Marie Smith did not set forth to "save baseball"; nor did they commit to the design concept as a marketing ploy

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[52]Forgey, Benjamin:"Baltimore's Home Run", Washington Post, March 29, 1992, p. C1
[53]Goldberger, Sept. 19, 1989, p. H3
[54]Pastier, John: "Architect's Play Ball", Metropolitan Home, October, 1989, p. 82
[55]Pastier,October, 1989 , p. 82

in anticipation of such favorable reactions. Rather, Smith insists, Oriole Park as built is merely a reflection of its surroundings; and, as such, represents the only conceivable design approach. "Having been given the spot, the architects and urban designers knew what to do with it."[56]

Furthermore, the notion that Oriole Park is simply a logical solution is reflected in the opinions about the site's selection. Camden yards is considered a "dream location" by critics,[57] but given the City's successful downtown redevelopment record, the decision to locate the project in the city's center, according to Smith, "is simply another example of Baltimore's moving a step ahead of what other cities are doing in their urban renaissance."[58]

Oriole Park is clearly a radical departure from the design concepts replicated throughout the 1970's and 80's, and for this departure it is held in high regard. But lost in all of the praise of its aesthetic charm is an understanding of the planning efforts involved in making this project feasible. Few seem to mention, for example,that many of the features that have already made this one of the most popular sports facilities in North America (inlcuding its location and design) were not adopted by simply by choice. Rather they result from an effort to plan Baltimore's stadium in a responsible manner. It is therefore important that, in planning stadia, designers and planners look beyond its salient features to understand the planning problems and decisions that lay behind them.

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[56]Forgey, March 29, 1992, p. C5
[57]Forgey, March 29, 1992, p. C5
[58]Masello, David: "Playing the Field", Architectural Record, Oct. 1990, p. 45

CHAPTER 3: The Toronto SkyDome

SkyDome, first opened to the public in 1989, is the product of a six year planning effort that followed dozens of unsuccessful attempts to provide the City of Toronto with its own 'world-class' stadium. Yet while this successful initiative began with typical visions of stadia common to municipalities across North America, issues of public and private financing, location, structure type, and city image would lead to the construction of a urban sports facility that is in a class of its own. Indeed SkyDome, with its wondrous retractable roof, movable seating system, extensive program of activities, and general aura of ultra-modernity speaks to the limits of imagination within which stadium planners and designers have been working for the past several decades. The purpose of this chapter is to present the Toronto SkyDome project from a planning perspective; to examine the forces behind its design and locations, and to assess the issues involved in planning "The World's Greatest Entertainment Center" for an urban context.

SkyDome Site and Context

Perhaps the most stunning aspect of SkyDome, aside from its unprecedented roof, is its location. Defying the conception of sports facilities as strictly suburban land uses, SkyDome is situated in the heart of the city, on the western fringe of the well defined core of downtown Toronto (Figure 3.1). Its downtown location puts it within blocks of many of the city's other attractions, including the Roy Thomson Concert Hall and the Royal Alexandra Theatre to the north, and the city's heralded Harbourfront pavilion only three blocks to the south (Figure 3.2). In addition, it lies adjacent to the Metro Toronto Convention Center, and to the CN Tower -with the stadium and tower comprising one of the most awesome land mark tandems in the world.

SkyDome's immediate context, however, is the Railway Lands -a conspicuously underdeveloped area relative to its dense surroundings. Once the heart of Toronto's

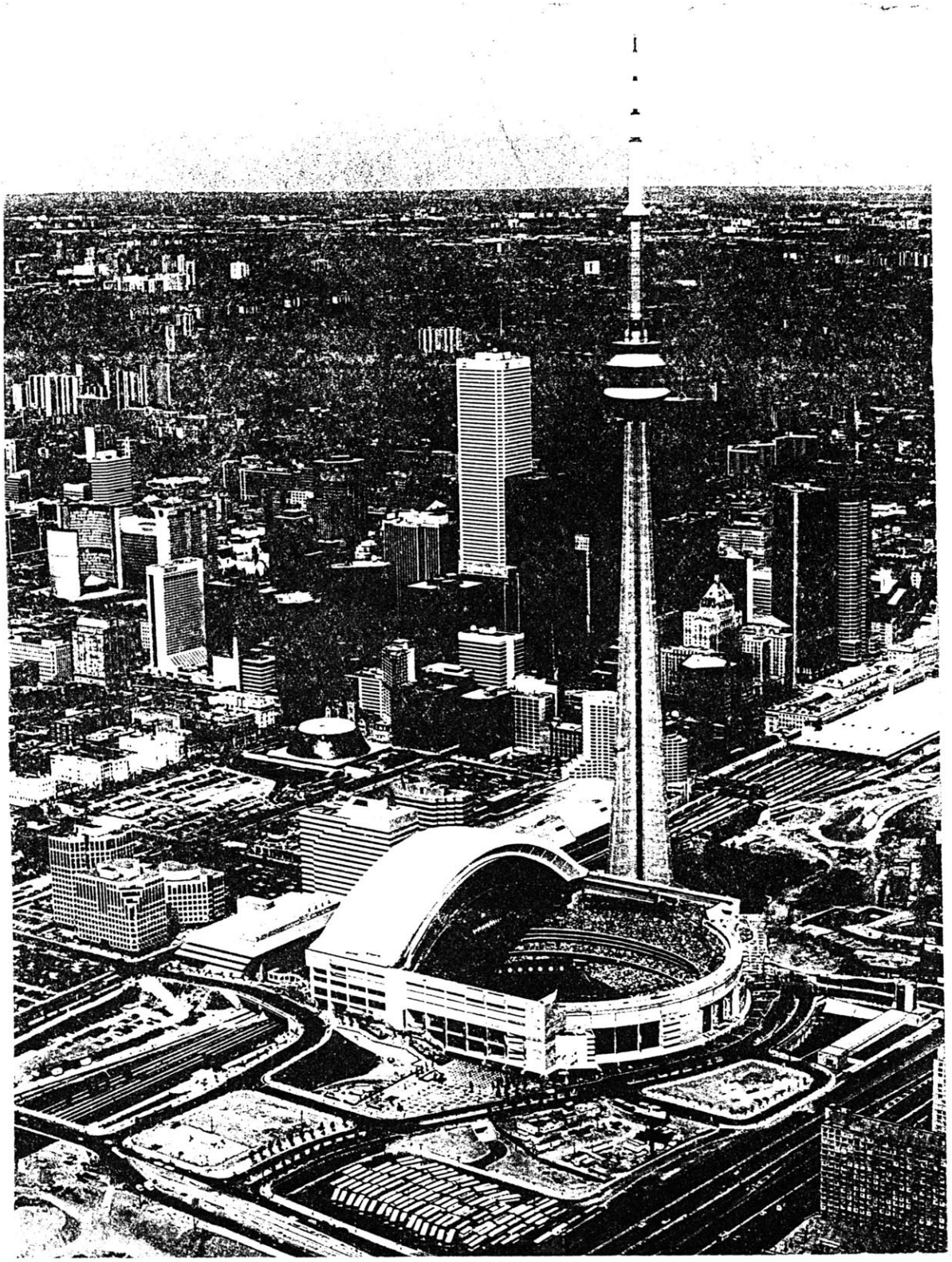

Figure 3.1
SkyDome, CN Tower, and the Toronto Convention Centre (behind CN Tower)
(SkyDome Publicity Photo)

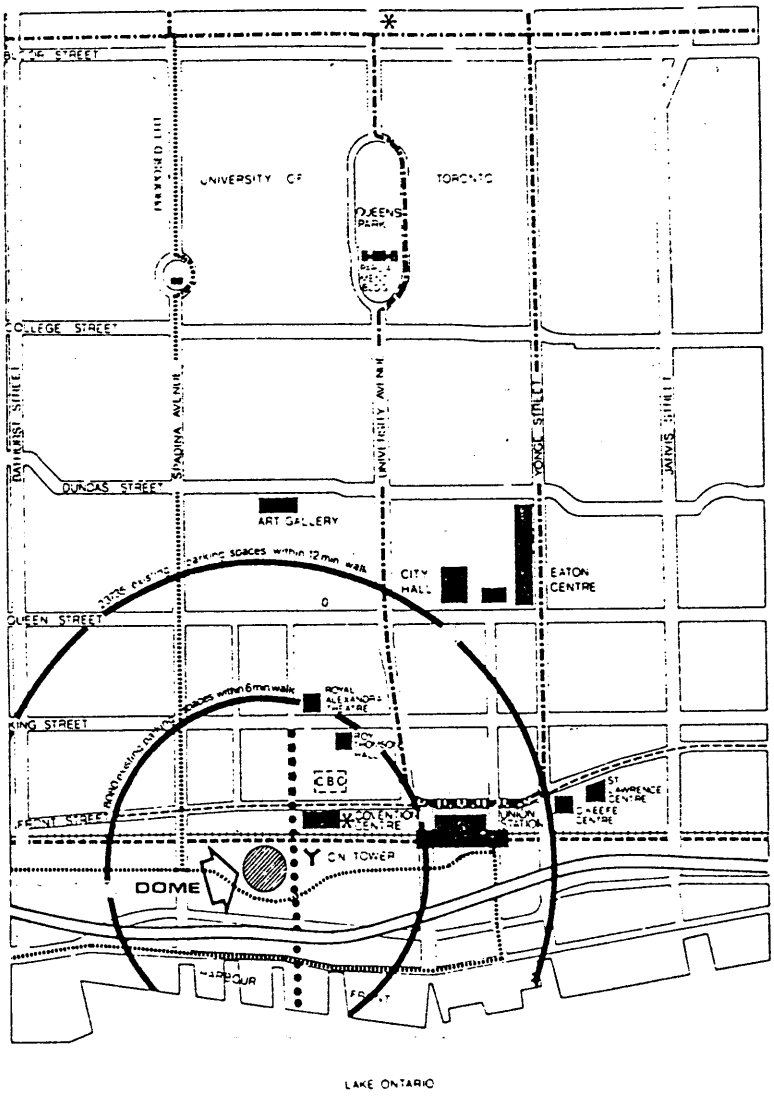

Figure 3.2
Points of interest near SkyDome
(CN Real Estate)

industry and the backbone of the city's economic growth, the Lands were in fact reclaimed throughout the 19th century, as the city's burgeoning rail and shipping activities exploded the city's natural physical boundaries. However, as Toronto's economy followed those of other cities in shifting away from heavy industry to tertiary, office-based activities over the past decades, the Railway Lands had gradually fallen into a state of underutilization.

The Initial Plans for the Railway Lands

The notion that the lands possessed untapped potential first surfaced in the early 1960's, with plans initiated from both the private and public sector. The plan which most influenced contemporary thoughts and objectives was the Metro Centre Development Plan and Program, released in 1968 by the two major landholders in the area: Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways. The Metro Centre proposal represented a modernistic perspective of the railway Lands' future: millions of square feet of office, commercial and residential space -the vast majority in tower complexes- to be erected form one edge of the site to the other. Figure 3.3 represents a view of the Metro Centre conception from the east.

Six years were subsequently spent attempting to have the plan approved, with no success. Questions arose on the behalf of the landowners concerning its financial feasibility as the market had yet to catch up with the costs of reusing the lands, while the idea of demolishing the historic Union Station grew unpopular. (The CN Tower stands as the sole symbol of the plan's grand vision). The Metro Center Plan was, however, influential in that it furthered planners later ideas about what was <u>not</u> appropriate function of the Railway Lands. Planning policy for the site that followed the shelving to the Metro Centre plan and preceded construction of SkyDome revolved around the fundamental premise that the site not be developed in its entirety as a distinct megastructure. Rather, that the site be blended sensitively into the fabric of the city, an initiative that would include replicating to the extent possible the familiar characteristics of the city, and relating land uses appropriately to the areas bordering the site. The concept of simply extending the functions of adjacent areas onto the Railway Lands was sensible in that it ensured on-site development that would relate appropriately to adjacent land uses. Furthermore, the definition of the railway Lands as an entity would be weakened as the various districts in the site would relate in function to their adjacent areas to the north rather than to each other.

While the approach of pulling the urban fabric over the Railway Lands has intuitive appeal, it would also allow for the site to be developed incrementally -an approach that was

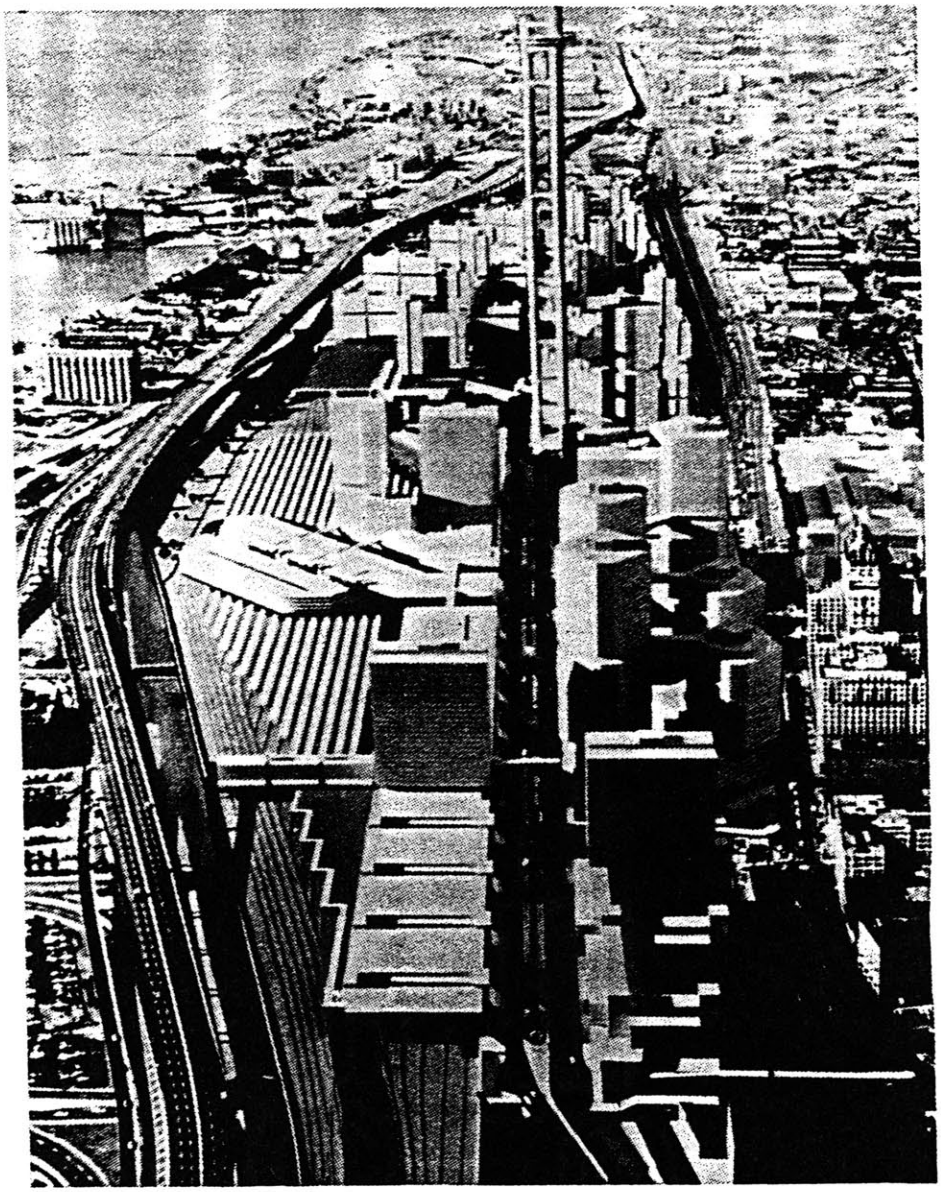

Figure 3.3
View of Metro Centre proposal from the east
(City of Toronto Planning and Development Department)

more consistently applied by the City's Planning Department.[1] Furthermore, it worked towards the overlaying objectives -carried over form the Metro Centre plan- that the Railway Lands serve to improve access to the adjacent CBD to the east and waterfront to the south. Figure 3.4 is a view of the 1983 plan for the Railway Lands.

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[1]McLaughlin, Stephen, Former Commisioner, City of Toronto Planning and Development Department, conversation, Jan. 27, 1992

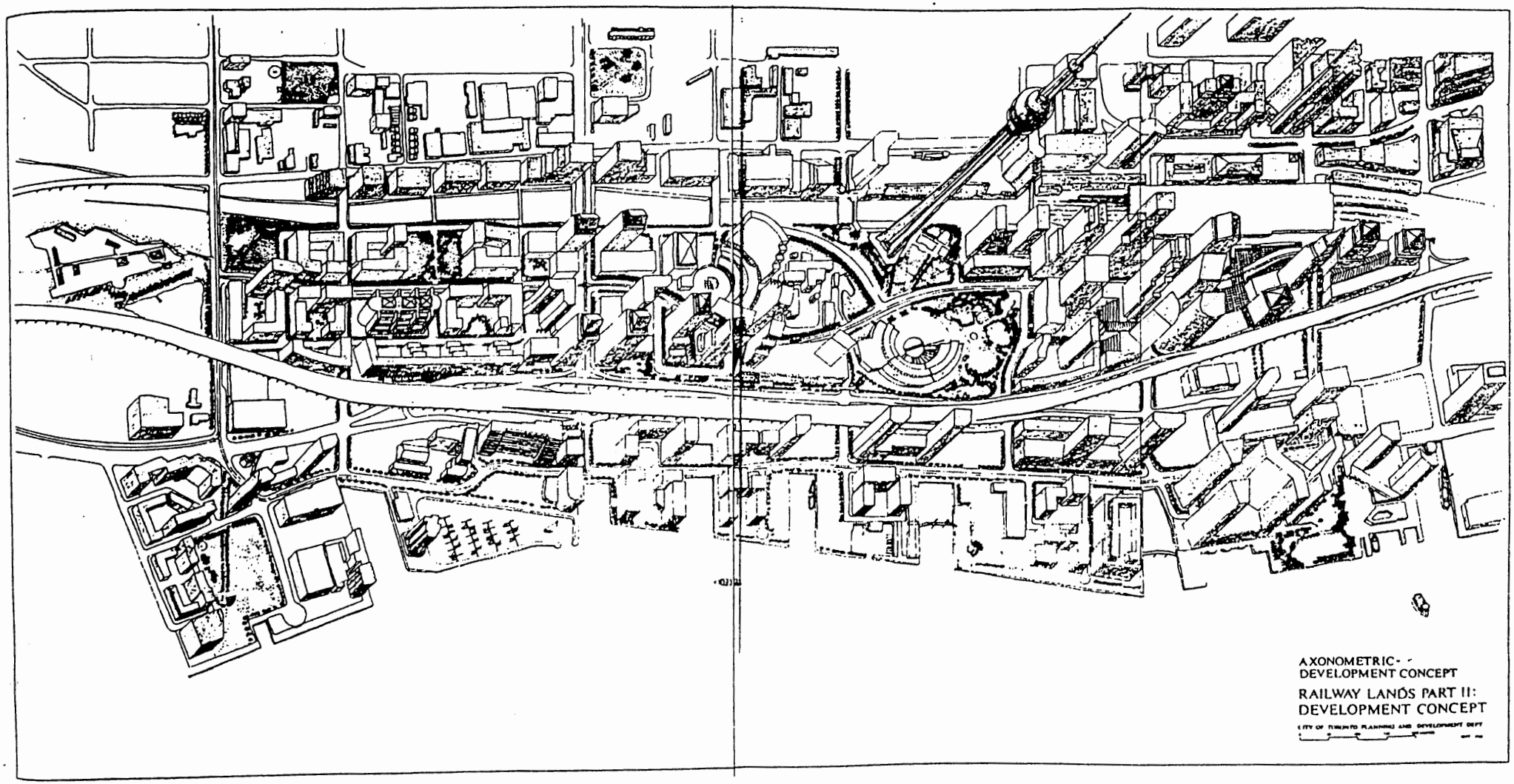

Figure 3.4
Pre-Stadium plan for the Railway Lands
(City of Toronto Planning and Development Department)

Elements of the SkyDome Project

SkyDome's designers have provided an interesting paradox. On the one hand, they have introduced the most effective solution yet to the dome/no dome and single purpose/dual-purpose design dilemmas by introducing unprecedented technology -and thus creating a landmark structure. But through design and programming, they have presented a concept that is decidedly more urban-friendly than any of the preceding Post-War and Modern-Age conceptions. It therefore defeats its predecessors at both fronts: serving its initial purpose more effectively while respecting the nature of its surrounds.

SkyDome is striking in that it extends well beyond conventional definitions of a stadium. While Camden Yards' planners have touted the future of sports stadia to be a return to early century concepts, SkyDome's planners and designers have attempted to rectify the shortcomings of modern, multi-purpose stadia by elaborating on the concept. Rather than designing a facility primarily around the needs of baseball and football tenants, SkyDome has an unprecedented versatility that enables it to particular space needs of almost any event imaginable.

The most obvious element of this versatility is SkyDome's retractable roof; the design of which took chief architect Rod Robbie and engineering consultant Michael Allen nearly a year to conceive. The two began with the premise that their concept should not only be safe, but that it *feel* safe; the designers understood the horror that could engulf the thousands of people over whom the roof would operate upon experiencing the movement of a building. Their design solution is a roof comprised of four sections of arched steel trusses -hemispheric end sections and arched telescopic sections covering the mid section (Figure 3.5). When retracted, the two center sections telescope straight forward while one end section rotates fully around, leaving 91% of the seating fully exposed. The entire process takes only 20 minutes, but is considered to be "like no other experience in architecture."[2]

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[2]Goldberger, Paul: "Double Header in Toronto: Batter Up, Top Down. New York Times, July 16, 1989, p. H 29

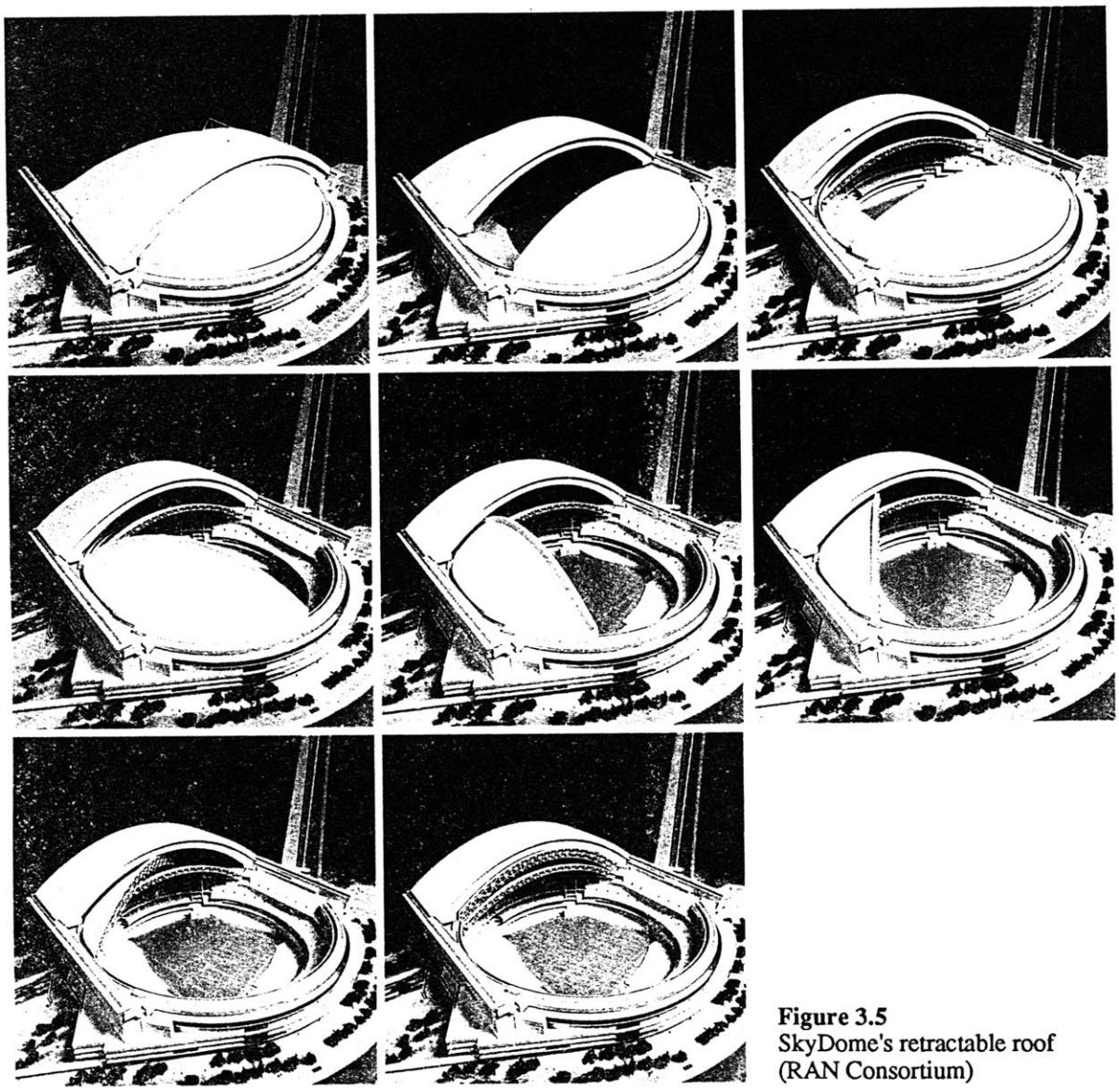

Figure 3.5
SkyDome's retractable roof
(RAN Consortium)

Thus, with its roof alone SkyDome is an era removed from other stadia. It leaves both fixed roof and open-anti stadia "obsolete" according to Robbie, as it guarantees optimal conditions for any event.[3] Indeed, the stadium has led to a new school of thought about how stadia might be covered (Figure 3.6) The roof does not, however, represent the full extent of SkyDome's changeable character. The stadium designers also improved upon modern stadium conventions by designing a flexible seating configuration. The

[3]Robbie, Roderick, conversation, Jan. 29, 1992

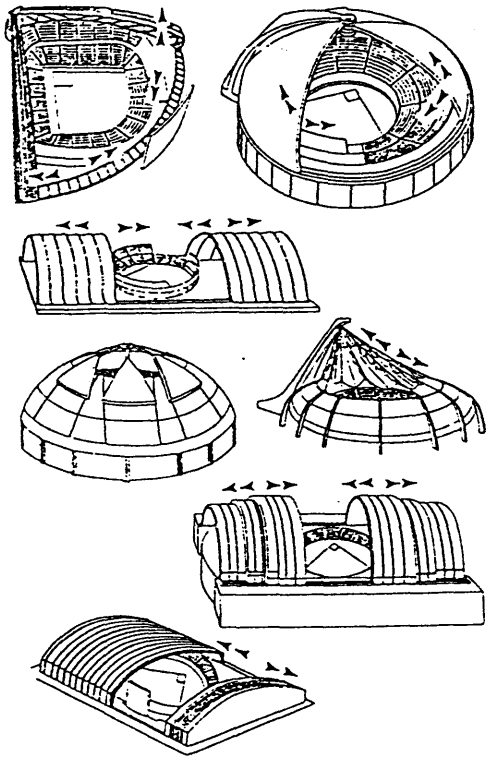

Figure 3.6
Other retractable roof concepts
(Mike Filey)

lower banks of seating are mounted on tracks, and can rotate around the interior of the stadium in order to optimize sight lines for baseball, football, and a range of other possible events (Figures 3.7). Thus, with these two examples of technical wizardry SkyDome separates itself from other stadia and domes -to be, according to its marketers, "The World's Greatest Entertainment Centre."[4]

SkyDome is further distinguished by the activity that takes place outside of the playing surface, as it possesses a diverse program that defies traditional conceptions of stadia. There are seven eating establishments in SkyDome, including a five star restaurant and two bars -all overlooking the playing surface- as well as North America's largest McDonald's. SkyDome also houses 14 conference rooms, a 7,000 SF fitness center, and its own $15 million television and radio production center. The most outstanding element of these, however, is the 348-room hotel (with seventy rooms overlooking SkyDome's

[4]Stadium Corporation of Ontario: SkyDome: "World's Greatest Entertainment Centre", December, 1991, p.1

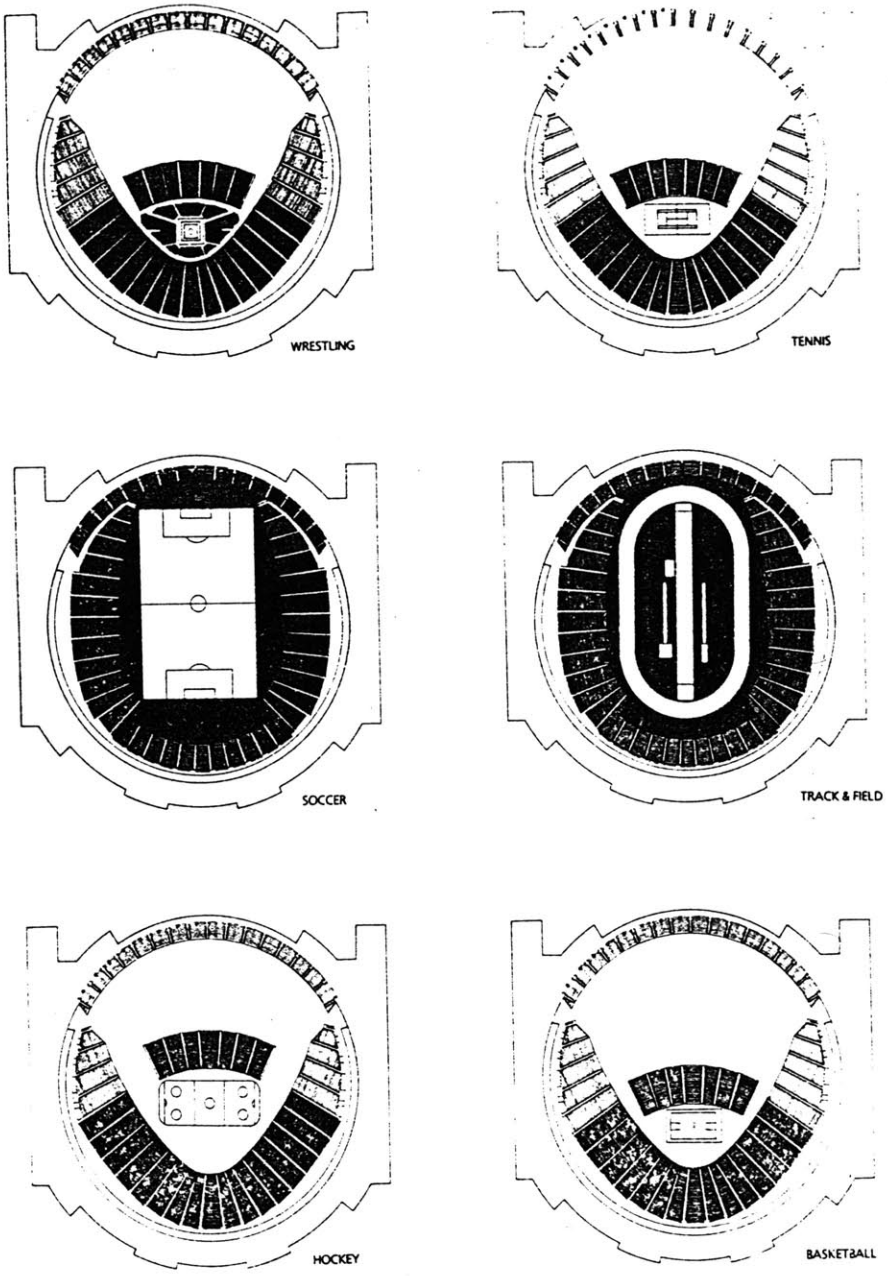

Figure 3.7
Some of SkyDome's possible seating arrangements
(Stadium Corporation of Ontario)

interior) draped around the stadiums northern elevation -occupying space underneath the retracted roof panels. It too represents a feat of engineering, as the entire structure is hung from the stadium (Figure 3.8).

SkyDome's range of activities are perhaps the definitive element of its image. "We don't want to be known as a jock palace" says Richard Peddie. Indeed, SkyDome's additional provisions are all open to the general public outside of event times. The building is thus less a flying saucer of sports, totally useless and abandoned save a few hours a week, and in fact functions as a decidedly multi-use structure.

The charge was on Roderick Robbie to devise an architectural solution that would compliment SkyDome's program and technological wizardry. Robbie's basic premise was to design for tomorrow, given the facility's futuristic disposition and 100 year design life (which, Robbie insists, translates into a 300 year life span). Robbie envisions extensive and continued growth in the urban fabric surrounding the stadium site over the next century, and consequently "designed the stadium as if it were in the middle of Manhattan."[5] The challenge was therefore to arrive at a design that would present the stadium as a special place in an environment of structures competing for attention, but would not simultaneously render the stadium unapproachable in a pedestrian environment.

Robbie thus shunned what he considers "the architectural style of the day"[6] sweeping stadium design, but also ignored the self-serving style of past stadia. Rather, SkyDome displays straight-sided east and west elevations, treated with horizontal strips of glazed curtain wall; integrated to minimize its scale and in replication of the buildings envisioned as one-day defining SkyDome's context. (Figure 3.9). Indeed, SkyDome's facades are criticized as being "appropriate to an office building",[7]when in fact this was the effect sought by Robbie as, paradoxically perhaps, it will allow his monumental

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[5]Robbie, Roderick, Chief Architect, the RAN Consortium, conversation, Jan. 29, 1992
[6]Robbie, Roderick, conversation, Jan. 29, 1992
[7]Diamond, A.J. "Domed Stadium, Toronto" Canadian Architect, May, 1989, p. 34.

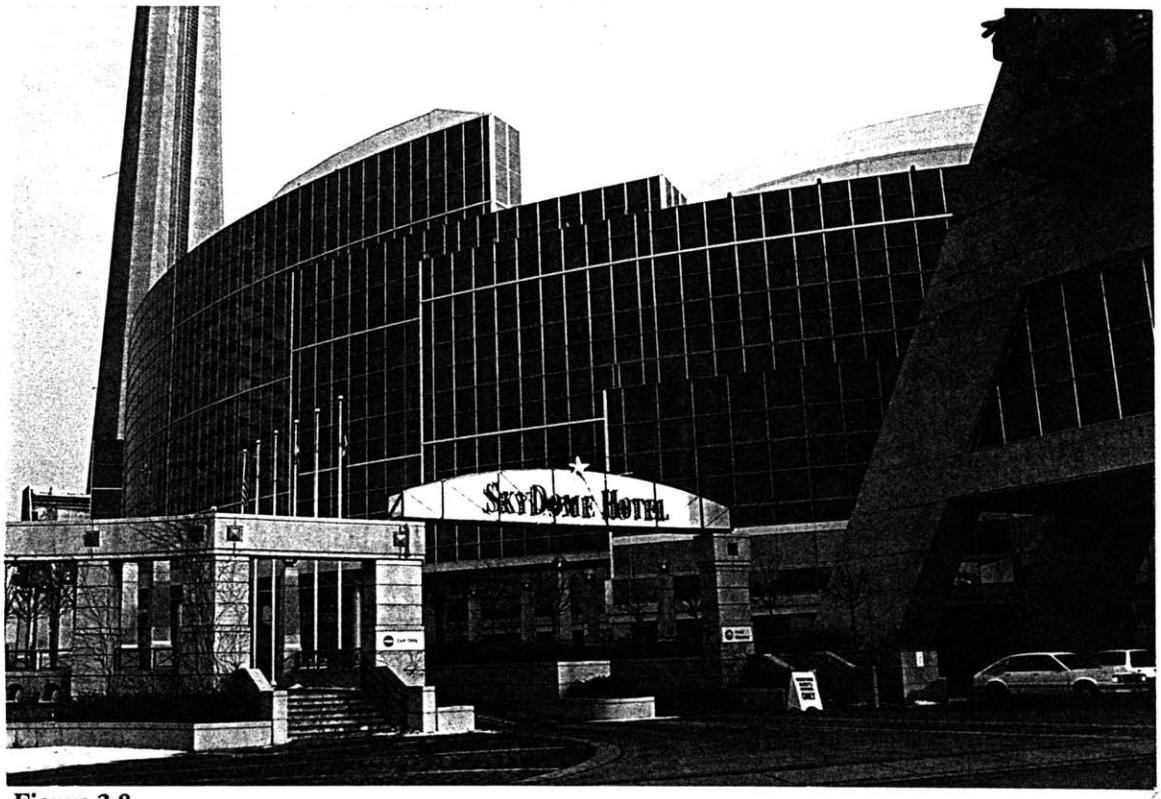

Figure 3.8
SkyDome Hotel, located on the north side of the stadium
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

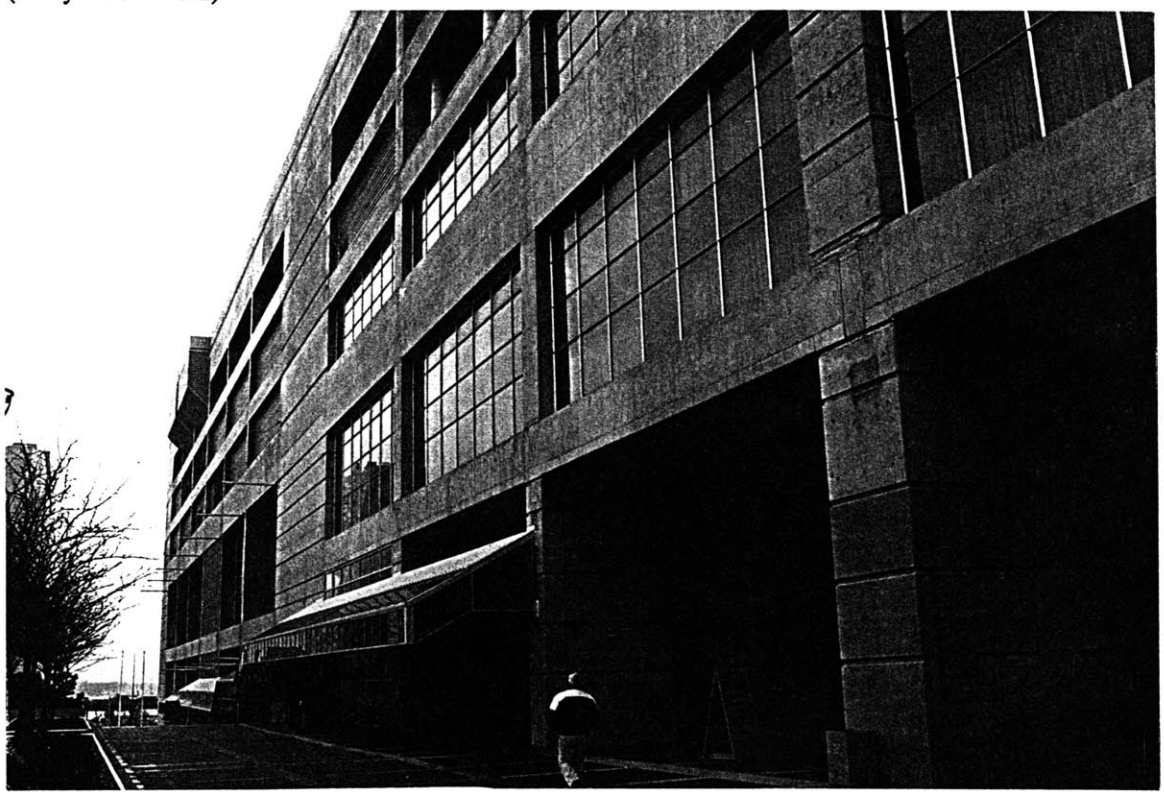

Figure 3.9
Fenestration along SkyDome's eastern elevation
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

facility to be as responsive to its environs as are the brown-bag ball parks of the Golden Age.[8]

Forces Behind SkyDome's Planning and Construction

The Political and Financial Backing

Although several stadium initiatives preceded the construction of SkyDome -as will be discussed, the political force behind this initiative emanated from the Provincial government. Toronto's 1976 acquisition of a Major League Baseball franchise generated a groundswell of public interest in the construction of a dome stadium "forcing political officials to formally consider the issue."[9]

Yet, those close to the project insist that even more influential than public pressure was one very propitious ordeal for Premier William Davis. No one became more convinced of the city's need for a dome when, in November 1982 he was forced to sit through horrific conditions while watching the Grey Cup, Canada's professional football championship, turn into an ice and rain folly. Davis' ordeal, as much as any other event, would lead to the construction of a new dome in Toronto.

Only seven months thereafter, Davis, formally announced to the public his decision to investigate the possibility of a new stadium for Toronto. While the Macaulay Committee's recommendation concerning stadium location was never acted upon, their recommendations regarding the other two key issues of facility type and location would ultimately serve to frame the stadium initiative. First, citing both a great "pleasure in watching baseball or football outdoors on a beautiful summer evening" and the versatility allowed by domes, the Macaulay Committee recommended "strongly that specifications for a new stadium include a retractable roof";[10] and in doing so formalized a concept that had

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[8]Goldberger, July 16, 1989, p. H 29

[9] Filey, Mike, Like No Other in the World, The Story of Toronto's SkyDome Sun Controlled Ventures Inc., Toronto, 1989, p. 48

[10]Macaulay, Hugh G.; Bremner, W.; Schipper, L.H.; McNeil, R.: The Stadium Committee Report, Province of Ontario, Feb., 1984,p. 65

previously been limited to rumor and speculation. In addition, the Committee recommended that financing include "significant participation by the private sector",[11] thereby establishing as a guideline the widely-held conviction that the public sector contribute extensively to the project.

Subsequent to the submission of the Macaulay Committee's report, the Premiere was tendered a financial offer by Canadian businessman Trevor Eyton. Eyton reported that he had organized a consortium of thirteen corporations that were willing to contribute over $60 million towards a dome stadium project. The $5 million put forth by each of the consortium members was not to be a donation, but rather an investment -a conversion of future benefits into initial capital investment.[12] Initial investments were to be traded for box seats, exclusive advertising rights, and preferred supplier status.[13] The fact that many of the consortium members were "brand name" corporations, including Coca-Cola, Merrill Lynch, and Labatt's Breweries, meant that these deals represented potentially high and long-term returns on investment. As a preferred supplier, consortium member McDonald's Canada, for example, was awarded exclusive concession rights. This original consortium has since evolved into the 30-member Stadium Corporation of Ontario.

SkyDome's Designers

The task of designing this unprecedented facility was awarded to the architect and engineering duo of Roderick Robbie and Michael Allen. For them the project evolved into an extremely exhaustive and risky proposition.

Upon arriving at their solution to the retractable roof design challenge, the pair engaged in a fierce series of competitions leading up to the final selection. Robbie insists it took as much energy to protect the design as it did to conceive it. "[The competing firms] did everything short putting contracts out on each other."[14] In order to survive the rigors of

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[11]Macaulay, p2
[12]Macaulay, p. 70
[13]Eyton, Trevor: Letter to Premier Davis, Jan. 17, 1985. In Macaulay et al., Appendix, p.2
[14]Robbie, conversation, Jan. 17, 1992

the later rounds -in which working drawings would be required, they would ultimately request the expertise and human power of the NORR Partnership, a large architecture firm eliminated in an early round. Together the three formed the RAN Consortium that would win the Toronto dome contract.

Robbie's and Allen's tribulations would however only begin with the victory. The Stadium Corporation imposed the condition that the team lower the cost by $40 million, thus forcing a redesign that would occupy a staff of 60 for ten months. However, the team received no fees until the drawings were completed.[15] With his firm on the verge of bankruptcy, Robbie went so far as to mortgage his house.

Pressure on Robbie and his design team would persist virtually up to the opening ceremonies, as the project remained "in a constant state of evolution."[16] The design/build process adopted for the project would be strained as program elements were continuously added. The hotel for example -proposed three months after groundbreaking- had to be designed seven times[17] and forced a virtual redesign of the stadium by Robbie's team.[18]

A member of the public-sector who would also have substantial impact on the SkyDome project was Stephen McLaughlin. As Commissioner of the City's Planning and Development Department throughout the planning of both SkyDome and Railway Lands area, McLaughlin led two major initiatives regarding the stadium's planning and design that would help the facility assimilate into the Railway Lands as proposed, making him an integral role-player in the project.

Although intrigued at the proposition of a downtown stadium, McLaughlin was insistent throughout that it perform as an urban stadium -something he believed had yet to be achieved elsewhere. For McLaughlin, this meant providing a multitude of activities,

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[15]Huntley, Chris: "Sports Coverage", Building, June 2, 1989, v. 254, #22, p.21
[16]Russell, James: "Open and Shut Case", Architectural Record, v. 177, #13, p. 131
[17]Robbie, conversation, Jan. 19, 1992
[18]Greenberg, L.M.: "Group May Buy Toronto's SkyDome". Wall Street Journal, Oct. 25, 1991, p. B3

permitting the stadium -like any urban building, in his opinion- to engage life beyond its primary purpose. "I kept saying we want an urban dome, not a suburban dome... a mix of uses to get a 24 hour life. Even office buildings should, in theory, have a mix of uses."[19] Why, then, not so for a stadium? Although McLaughlin was initially ignored by the Province, he was the first to propose the multitude of activities that currently serve to define SkyDome.

McLaughlin's second initiative was to ensure that the stadium also present itself as an urban structure architecturally. To this end, he defined a set of guidelines that were, in part, a criticism of Robbie's winning entry. In addition to being too tall, McLaughlin believed the stadium to be "too fat"[20] such that it would not relate well with the street grid to the north and with the street pattern planned for the Railway Lands. A compromise was reached whereby the approaching streets would be slightly realigned in order to terminate views of John and Peter Streets approaching from the north and to provide a gateway affect.[21]

In addition, it was McLaughlin who would convince Robbie to articulate the east and western elevations in a manner consistent with "normal urban buildings",[22] and to encourage public's interest in the building's edges by providing such pedestrian-scale amenities as glazed canopies along the facade and landscaped mezzanines.[23] Clearly, McLaughlin approached the design of SkyDome with and understanding of what would be the stadium's future context.

Motivation: Why SkyDome was Built

A Legacy of Stadium Plans

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[19]McLaughlin, Stephen, conversation, January 20, 1992
[20]McLaughlin, Stephen, conversation, January 20, 1992
[21]City of Toronto : Railway Lands Part II: Rezoning Application for Precint A, City of Toronto Planning and Development Department, Jan., 1986, p. 15
[22]City of Toronto : Jan., 1986, p. 13
[23]City of Toronto : Jan., 1986, p. 13, 15

As was the case in Baltimore, the question as to whether Toronto needed a new stadium did not begin with the SkyDome project. Indeed, the dome is the realization of long-standing efforts to build a stadium in Toronto.

Efforts to build a stadium in Toronto date as far back as 1923,[24] and virtually all initiatives have revolved around the argument that 'major-league caliber city' and should therefore have a major league facility. Indeed, for decades Toronto was bound by the Catch-22 of needing to build a stadium in order to lure professional baseball. A major effort to surmount this dilemma was undertaken 1954, when the City of Toronto put forth a request to the Metro Toronto Planning Board to compile a report outlining suitable sites for a multi-use stadium. The preamble to the request indicates that, like Baltimore and many other cities, the city was concerned about the relationship between urban image and professional sports.

> Metropolitan Toronto's status as the business headquarters for Eastern Canada and its growing stature as a metropolitan centre have made it a logical location for conventions and trade shows... It would also appear that a real demand exists for stadium facilities which might accommodate major league baseball, professional football and possibly the British Empire Games...[25]

Although this initiative was never acted upon, it exemplifies a great deal of the motivation behind the Toronto stadium initiative.

The idea that Toronto ought not only to build a stadium, but one that represented the state of the art, preceded SkyDome by nearly thirty years. The 1965 unveiling of the Houston Astrodome, the world's first fully enclosed stadium, would alter the nature of the stadium debate, as a domed facility would become the centerpiece of almost every subsequent initiative in Toronto. Stadium proponents argued that not only was Toronto's harsh climate deserving of an all-weather facility, but "everyone believed that a major

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[24]Filey, p. 41
[25]Filey, p. 43

league baseball franchise would surely follow the decision to build a dome"[26] and that it would without question certify Toronto's status as a major league city.

Nevertheless, Toronto would continue to go without a successful stadium initiative long after the Astrodome's opening. And with the opening of a number of domed stadia across North America in such cities as Detroit, Minneapolis, and Indianapolis, as well as Canada's first in Vancouver, the novelty of domes -and thus much of the impetus to build one in Toronto- waned. However, business and government officials continued to push for a stadium, but in their image of Toronto as an emerging world center, believed their city was worthy of more. Thus, by the time the Macaulay Commission was convened in 1984, their was a strong movement to investigate to potential of building the world's first retractable roof stadium in Toronto,

A second approach initiated in the 1960's -also related to the city's image- was to promote a new stadium as a magnet for the Summer Olympic Games. In an effort to lure the 1968 Summer Games to Toronto, G. Ross Anderson, a Toronto native and professor of architecture at the University of Kansas, conceived a 100,000 seat stadium -based on the facility built in Melbourne for the 1956 Summer Games- that could be devoted to baseball and football following the Olympics.[27] Although strongly supported by the City, this particular initiative would die when the 1968 Games were awarded to Mexico City[28].

And in 1969, Metro Chairman William Allen combined the dome and Olympics approach by suggesting that construction of the former would bring the latter and would also lure a baseball franchise.[29] Ultimately, Toronto would not only lose out on the Olympics but would watch them be awarded to rival city Montreal.

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[26]Filey, p. 46
[27]Filey, p. 44
[28]Filey, p. 44
[29]Filey, p. 45

Efforts to combine the Olympics and stadium initiatives would also affect the decision to build SkyDome. As the stadium was completed, Toronto engaged in its most vigorous campaign to lure the 1996 Summer Olympics to Toronto.

The Financial Impetus

One of the main reasons that a dome initiative would finally succeed was due to the nullification of the strongest anti-stadium arguments. The concept of a publicly funded stadium, while gaining wide acceptance in the United States, remained wholly unpopular in Ontario.

While many American politicians have supported stadium projects for fear of the consequences of opposing them, Canadian politicians had for years been vociferous about spending public monies in what they considered to be an irresponsible and inequitable manner. Even the extreme start-up costs of a dome project was an insufficient argument for public funding. Previous initiatives had been met with assurances that "there was no way that the [provincial] government would lay out [major funding] to help provide a stadium or any other facilities that private enterprises could use."[30] Efforts were further undermined as Torontonians watched Montreal's inoperative convertible stadium balloon in a construction and repair costs to over $1.2 billion dollars

Trevor Eyton thus weakened this position and made strong progress towards a dome's construction when he announced to Premiere William Davis that he had organized a consortium of corporations interested in funding a substantial portion of a stadium's cost. The decision by consortium members to invest in the stadium project was based largely on the type of structure proposed. The fact that a retractable roof was recommended to Davis by the Macaulay Committee gave prospective investors the vision of investing not in a well-precedent, unremarkable fixed-roof facility, but rather in a unique "world class" facility.[31]

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[30]Filey, p. 48

[31]Eyton, 1985,In Macaulay et al., Appendix p.2

While many members trumpet patriotic motives for wanting a retractable roof[32], influencing the decisions on stadium type was viewed as a means of ensuring returns on investment. Such an unprecedented and awesome facility would most likely attract millions of patrons and more importantly, would attract a plethora of tenants beyond the local football and baseball teams. A retractable roof would guarantee optimal conditions for functions of virtually any scale and scope; this, in addition to its novelty, made for an attractive investment opportunity.

Factors Behind the Decision to Locate Downtown

Financing

Thus, while the Maryland Stadium Authority was mandated to fund a stadium type and location it saw fit -(with these two issues themselves being considered independently), such would not be the case in Toronto. Because a substantial portion of funding would emanate from the private sector (if the committee's recommendations were to be followed) it is not surprising that conditions be imposed by the private sector on the key issue of facility type.

But so too would the private investors influence the decision on the key issue of location. During unfruitful negotiations with the Federal Government for the rights to land on the periphery of a suburban Canadian Forces air base -indeed, the site recommended by the Macaulay Committee, Premier Davis was approached by Canadian National Railway with an offer of a site on its downtown railway land holdings, next to its famous CN Tower. The offer coincided with that of Eyton, who's consortium -in addition to attempting to prescribe a stadium type- hedged their participation on selection of a downtown location.

With this offer on the table, Davis' support of the committee's site recommendation waned:

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[32]Pickard, J.L.; Araujo, I. C.: "Financing Toronto's SkyDome: A Unique Partnership of Public and Private Funding, Government Finanace Review, Dec. 1989, p.11

> It became clear that the financial arrangements and the choice of stadium site are highly interrelated. In the end, therefore, site selection has strongly been influenced by the financial considerations that are possible.

As Davis went on to point out, this reality stemmed from his political (and Canadians' social) conviction that public sponsorship be kept at an absolute minimum -a position reinforced -as mentioned- by the Macaulay Committee. But clearly the trade-off was a relinquishment of public authority over the major decisions of stadium type and site, as the project could not go forward without the consortium's financial participation.

Land Use Context as a Factor in the Location Decision

The consortium's position was that a convertible stadium was not simply an athletic facility, but a monument that would serve to mark Ontario's place in the world. Consequently, location of such a landmark facility, in their opinion, took on particular meaning. In their opinion "the potential for a [retractable roof] Dome to be the premiere sports, mass entertainment, convention and meeting forum in North America will greatly be enhanced if it is located on the CN site"[33] -a view that in fact reflects a continued commitment to strengthening and enriching the city's downtown. For within two blocks of the CN site were already many of the city's most popular attractions and gathering spaces (both categories befitting the proposed stadium), including the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Roy Thomson Concert Hall, the city's Harbourfront commercial and cultural center, and immediately adjacent to the site, the CN Tower and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre (see Figure 3.1). In CN's opinion, "the marketing of the stadium [i.e. its profit potential as a multi-faceted activity center] will surely benefit from... its proximity to [these] already highly marketed attractions."[34]

Another of the site's perceived advantages was the lack of adjacent residential areas. Indeed, a key criterion used in the Macaulay Committee's site evaluation was any stadium

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[33]Eyton, 1985,In Macaulay et al., Appendix p.2

[34]CN Real Estate: CN Tower Dome Proposal the Ontario Stadium Corporation, September 1984, p. 3

be located "so that would not impact unreasonably on its immediate neighbors and neighborhoods."[35] Railway Lands proponents argued that, unlike the majority of sites previously considered by the Committee, "the [CN] site is not immediately adjacent to, and therefore cannot impact materially upon close neighbors."[36]

Parking & Access

SkyDome was also promoted by CN as the most accessible location of any potential site, both in terms of vehicular and public-transportation access. Within three blocks of the proposed site was Union Station; hub for Canada's national passenger rail service, terminus for the regional commuter system, and a stop along the city's subway system. Additionally, plans were in the works for a Spadina Avenue LRT that would pass the site to the west, and a Railway Lands LRT that would pass by the site, connecting it to Union Station and to the waterfront.

Vehicular access was also considered superior. The site is served by the Gardiner Expressway, and by Lakeshore Boulevard, which -when coupled with the network of seven arterials- "handles downtown Toronto's traffic loads in an acceptable fashion" and was thus considered capable of handling SkyDome's traffic loads.[37]

Decisions on how to plan parking for the stadia were a direct function of the excellent mass-transit access to the site: to provide on-site parking, according to officials, would only provide incentive for patrons not to use mass-transit. As former Planning Commissioner McLaughlin added, to submerge the facility in a sea of parking would hinder future development of the Railway Lands. The number of on site spaces was therefore limited to 500.

This position was, however, predicated on availability of parking in Toronto's downtown core and at Harbourfront. An analysis of existing parking facilities, conducted

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[35]Macaulay, et. al. p.7
[36]CN Real Estate, p.2
[37]CN Real Estate, p.2

as part of the CN site offering, showed that up to 8760 spaces would be available to stadium patrons, while demand (based on projected modal splits) would not surpass 6,300 during weekends or weekday evenings. The analysts, however, could not guarantee sufficient parking for weekday events which, in any case, would be extremely infrequent.[38]

Impacts of the Stadium

The Economic Impacts

Following through on the objectives of planners, SkyDome has gone beyond the classification of sports facility; its diverse program and range of events have helped define SkyDome as a quintessential element of Toronto.

This is due in part to the intensity with which the facility has been used. In 1991, SkyDome was occupied for 282 days, nearly 80% of the year,[39] and in previous years 35% of events in SkyDome have not been related to sports.[40] Events housed in SkyDome ranged in 1991 from the Moscow Circus to a sold out performance of a Broadway musical, in total attracted 5.4 million visitors,[41] -testament to its planners' objectives of creating more than a mere "jock palace".

SkyDome has further breached the conventional bounds of multi-purpose athletic facilities by becoming an attraction in itself. Research by SkyDome officials has revealed a "Dome factor" of 35%, meaning that over one third of patrons would not have attended events were they not held in SkyDome. The phenomenon also affects tenancy. "Without SkyDome, there are events which would never have been showcased in Toronto"

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[38]Barton-Aschamn Associates, Ltd.: "A New Stadium for the Toronto Area: Transportation Impact Study of A Site on the Railway Lands Southwest of the CN Tower, p.8

[39]Garrick, David: SkyDome, The Economic Benefits , Stadium Corporation of Ontario, Oct., 1991, p.4

[40]Fingersh, Juile: CEO's "Goal for SkyDome: To Boldy Go where No Stadium Has Gone Before", Amusement Business, Sept. 23, 1991, p. 12

[41]Garrick, David: SkyDome - Year End Review. Stadium Corporation of Ontario, Dec. 11, 1991, p.1

according to David Garrick, SkyDome's Vice President of Corporate Affairs.[42] He includes in this list the professional baseball All-Star Game, awarded to Toronto two years after the stadium's opening, and many major concerts and operas.[43] Indeed, SkyDome has established itself as a special place -as arguably Toronto's premiere landmark.

Impacts of image have been accompanied economic impacts considered by some analysts to be "immense."[44] Some of the most discernible impacts have been tax revenues as -unlike a number of North American sports facilities- SkyDome is not exempt from taxes. Officials estimate that the facility will generate over $38 million in annual Municipal, Provincial, and Federal Taxes. In addition, SkyDome has subsidized Metropolitan Toronto's infrastructure through in-kind provisions of $45 million worth of improvements; including $17 million in new roadways, and the $24 million replacement of the Railway Lands sixty year old pumping station.[45]

In addition to direct economic impacts, SkyDome is argued to be generating tremendous spin-off benefits. The stadium "has spawned an entire district of bars and restaurants"[46], business in area restaurants increases 40% at times of SkyDome events, and hotel occupancy increases 25% on evenings when the Blue Jays are playing at home[47]; the latter figure testament to the teams historically significant regional following. In total, analysts have estimated that SkyDome generated $450 million in regional economic activity, and 16,800 person-years in employment during its first full year of operation.[48]

SkyDome's positive economic benefits have, however, been partly offset by its cost to the province. So much so that within three years SkyDome has thus gone from a "a model of civic endeavor"[49] based on its joint public-private backing to "a cautionary tale

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[42]Garrick, David, Vice President, Corporate Affairs for the Stadium Corporation of Ontario, conversation, Jan. 29, 1992
[43]Garrick, Oct., 1991, p.4
[44]Pickard, J.L.; Araujo, I. C. , p.11
[45]Garrick,Oct., 1991, p1
[46]Freedman, Adele: "Convertible Stadium in Toronto", Progressive Architecture, Aug., 1989, p.26
[47]Garrick, Oct., 1991, p.3
[48]Pickard, J.L.; Araujo, I. C., p. 11
[49]Pickard, J.L.; Araujo, I. C., p. 12

about how not to build a civic monument."[50] This joint partnership had initially planned to spend $233 million on SkyDome, with the city and province each contributing $30 million to add to the $5 million put up by each of the corporations (the list of which would grow to thirty from those originally recruited by Eyton). With a projected debt of only $23 million, the province agreed to guarantee all borrowings required for construction.[51]

The province's financial responsibility would, however, go well beyond initial estimates.

Late program additions, construction overruns, and worker strikes ultimately pushed SkyDome's final cost to nearly $600 million, leaving taxpayers with a debt of $330 million. The problems grow worse as interest costs create annual losses and add to the debt, despite the facility's meeting of annual operating revenue goals. The new provincial government has sought escape from the endeavor, offering the province's share of ownership, now at 51%, to any parties willing to assume the debt. However, the government has no leverage over corporations who are partially responsible for the cost overruns, and none are interested in increased equity in SkyDome.[52] Although it was not intended to be the case, it appears Ontarians will be following the path taken by taxpayers across North America: "Anyone who thinks that the taxpayers won't be stuck with much of [SkyDome's] debt is living in a dream world."[53]

Transportation and Parking Impacts

In assessing SkyDome's impact on the city's transportation services, it would appear that -as was hoped- a substantial proportion of patrons are relying on alternative means of access to the stadium. SkyDome officials originally found that 54% of visitors were accessing the stadium by either public transit or commuter train.[54] More recently though, public transit

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[50]Greenberg, p. B3

[51]Symonds, WIlliam: "Take Me Out to the Cleaners", Business Week, May 6, 1991, p. 40

[52]Greenberg, p. B3

[53]Symonds, p. 40

[54]Stadium Corporation of Ontario: SkyDome: "World's Greatest Entertainment Centre", December, 1991, p.18

usage has slipped to 30%, but only, according to David Garrick, as part of an equilibrium process -that the downtown parking reservoir was underutilized. "People were finding that there was lots of parking and they could get out fast."[55] Garrick insist, though that the leveling off of the modal split has not adversely impacted the area. "Nobody's complaining; there's no gridlock."[56]

SkyDome's Affect on Plans for the Railway Lands

While SkyDome has already impacted the City, the stadium has also affected plans for the future of the Railway Lands. The announcement that the province would build a dome in the middle of the Railway Lands came three years after the City had formalized these objectives in the 1983 Railway Lands plan. One might expect that the dome announcement was met with some frustration and anger by the City Planning Department. But on the contrary, the decision to locate the stadium on the site, according to former Toronto City Planning Commissioner Stephen McLaughlin, will allow the prescribed functions of the Railway Lands to be more easily achieved.

The announcement of the stadium's siting had been preceded by two factors that would have ultimately killed the 1983 Railway Land's development concept. One was a lack of demand for either new office or retail space. The second -and related- major sticking point was that, despite a conceptual framework that would foster the desired incremental development, start-up capital costs (primarily in the form of infrastructure) would be substantial. In light of the weak market, neither the City nor the Province were willing to invest in capital projects for which returns were not guaranteed.

McLaughlin viewed the stadium's location on the Railway Lands as a means by which these barriers could be overcome. With SkyDome, suddenly there was a demand for the infrastructure -the stadium was the "critical mass" for which the Railway Land's

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[55]Garrick, David, Vice President of Coroprate Affairs, Stadium Corporation of Ontario, conversation, January 29, 1992

[56]Garrick, conversation, January 29, 1992

planners had hoped. "What the dome did was pre-empt [the governments' earlier reluctance], and they started building the infrastructure -which never would have been built otherwise."[57] Furthermore, McLaughlin points out that this stadium in no way compromises the city's incremental approach to development; rather the stadium represents a necessarily larger first increment that will make subsequent, modest developments feasible. "Things don't always have to happen at the same pace. People think that 'incremental' means you build little things all the time. Not necessarily. Sometimes you need a big thing to make a whole bunch of little things happen. So there was a challenge of getting a critical mass in place without destroying the sense of incrementalism."[58] The stadium thus represented a means of meeting this challenge.

The City of Toronto had to therefore consider the problem of how the area surrounding the new downtown stadium ought to function given the sudden siting of a sports facility in its midst. Given the popular conceptions of stadia as disruptive, unwanted land uses, it is perhaps surprising that SkyDome has not affected the definition of traditional residential, commercial, and office uses deemed appropriate for the area; rather, that the stadium enhances the plausibility of the city's plan and can thus be used to achieve planning objectives, and that unspectacular land uses provide an appropriate framework for the stadium.

It was McLaughlin's position that the type and density of traditional urban functions prescribed to the railway lands would go unchanged following the decision to site the dome downtown. Canadian architect A.J. Diamond represents a most popular position in suggesting that the uses of the Railway Lands ought to have been redefined on purely functional grounds; "football fans will probably not enhance Class A office development, and noisy crowds will not make for a wonderful residential environment."[59] McLaughlin

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[57]McLaughlin, Stephen: Conversation, Jan. 27, 1992
[58]McLaughlin, Stephen: Conversation, Jan. 27, 1992
[59]Diamond, p. 32

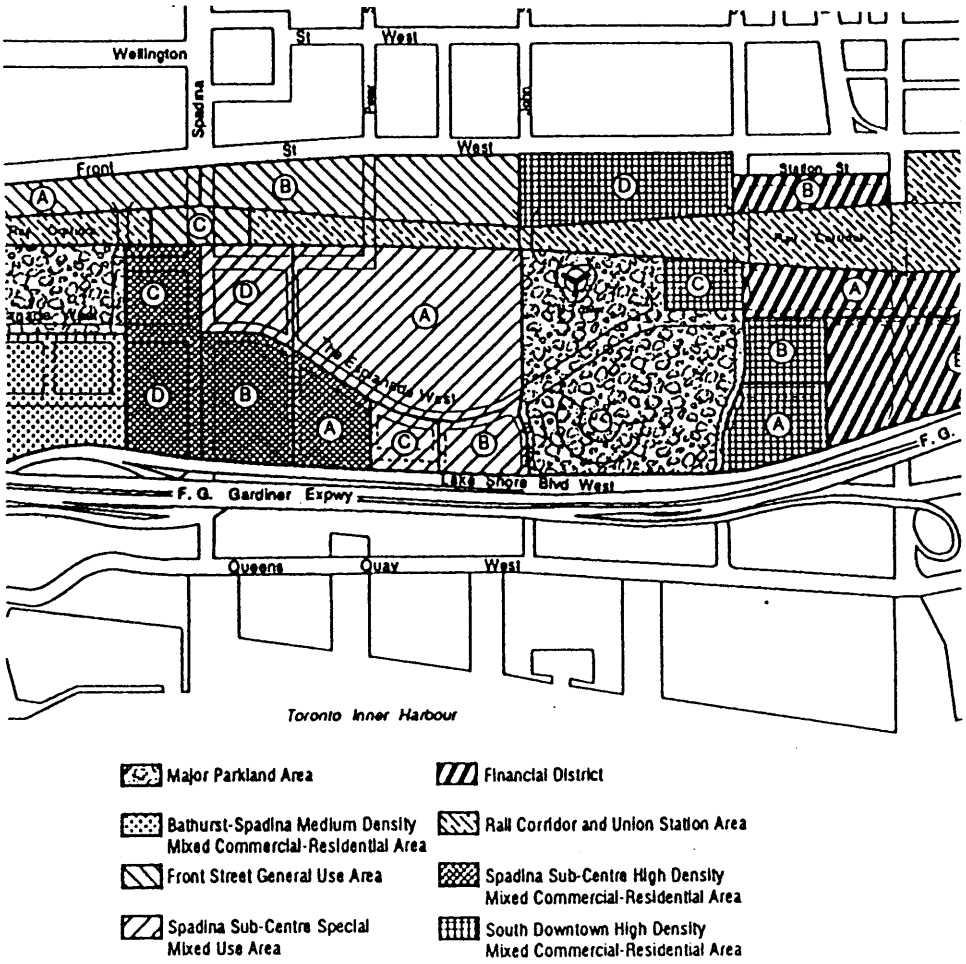

Figure 3.10
1985 land-use plan
(City of Toronto Planning and Development Department)

counters that he was not at all concerned about combining the stadium with residential and office uses, despite one of the initial attractions of the dome site being its removal form any existing residential areas.

Driven by McLaughlin's initial position that the city's pre-stadium objectives for the lands be pursued, the Planning Department spent several years reconsidering the distribution of land uses. The land use designation arrived at by 1991 represents what Planner Robert Gosse refers to as a "rationalized" land-use concept. (Compare Figures 3.10 and 3.11) The term applies to several aspects of the plan. First, in keeping with the objective of blending land uses on site with those adjacent to the railway, the Planning Department used the stadium's presence to better define the east-west progression of activities. As mentioned, the

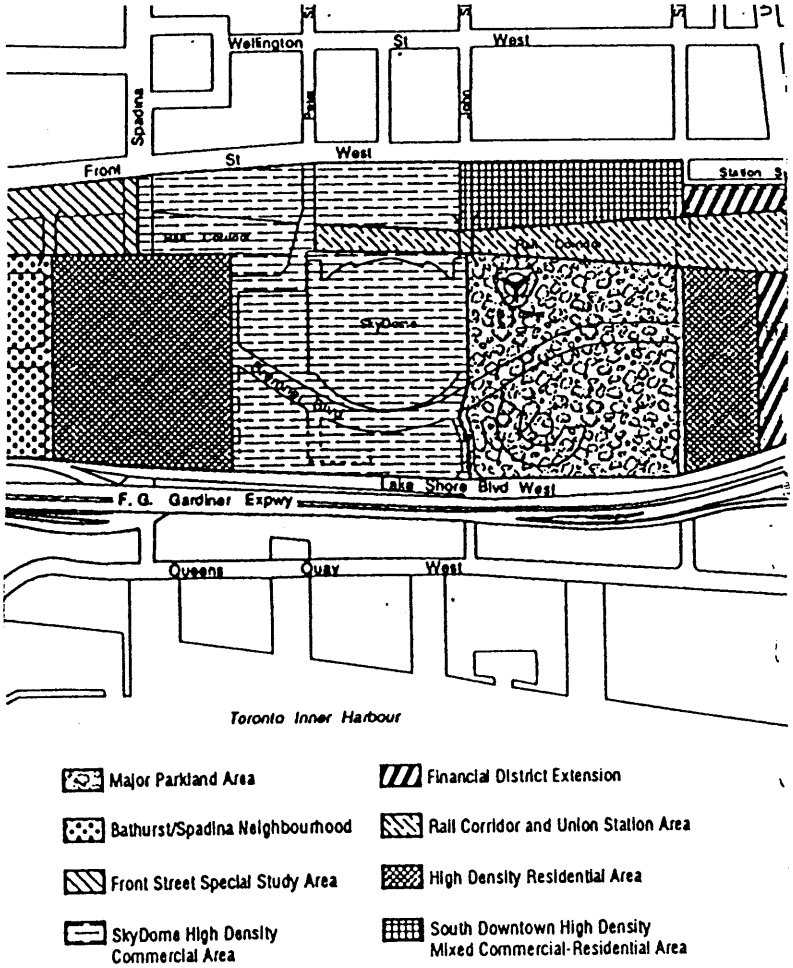

Figure 3.11
1991 "rationalized" land-use plan
(City of Toronto Planning and Development Department)

1985 plan proposed transferring residential densities to Spadina Avenue; the 1991 plan also proposes that commercial densities be reallocated or removed in order to convert the sub-centre to a residential area. As high-density residential sub-centers have been planned and implemented successfully at major intersections throughout Toronto, this new designation -resulting form the stadium's location- works towards the objective of including familiar elements of the city into the Railway Lands.

A second, stadium-related land-use change from the 1985 plan was the relocation of commercial in turn from Spadina Avenue to the area immediately surrounding the stadium. This is a rational move for several reasons. As Gosse points out, the commercial area will function as a mitigating buffer shielding residential uses along Spadina and further

westward. But equally significant is the anticipated synergy that will evolve where the commercial densities are paired with the stadium.

The streets and blocks site plan was perhaps the most significant element of the early plans for the Railway Lands, as the continuation of the city's circulation pattern was central to the desire of meshing the Railway Lands into the city. Impacts of the proposed stadium on the road plan could therefore have decimated the objectives for the site. Although some critics disagree,[60] the stadium has in fact impacted the road system proposal to a minimal extent.

Comparing Figures 3.12 and 3.13, the only required adjustments to the original plan include the removal of a portion of one secondary route along the rail corridor. Indeed, the stadium takes advantage of the one pre-planned divergence from the gird pattern: the bulge in the Esplanade designed to accommodate the pumping station (which was to be relocated in favor of the stadium). As Stephen McLaughlin suggests, providing a stadium site subsequent to the completion of the road plan had little impact, thus enabling the city to progress in its plans for the Railway Lands.[61]

In addition to reconsidering the land uses and street plans for the Railway Lands following the stadium's siting, planners were also required to review guidelines for the built form that would ultimately surround the facility. Although the area around the stadium will develop physically after Skydome's construction, the plans for the area have changed only in that they will work with the stadium in achieving a vision of the Railway Lands. Indeed, the approach taken in the review has not been to deal with the Railway Lands as a "blank slate" following the construction of SkyDome. On the contrary, City planning efforts have exploited its presence to achieve the initial objectives that the area ultimately function as a traditional center of mixed uses at a range of densities. In order for this objective to be

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[60]Diamond, p. 33

[61]McLaughlin, conversation, 1992

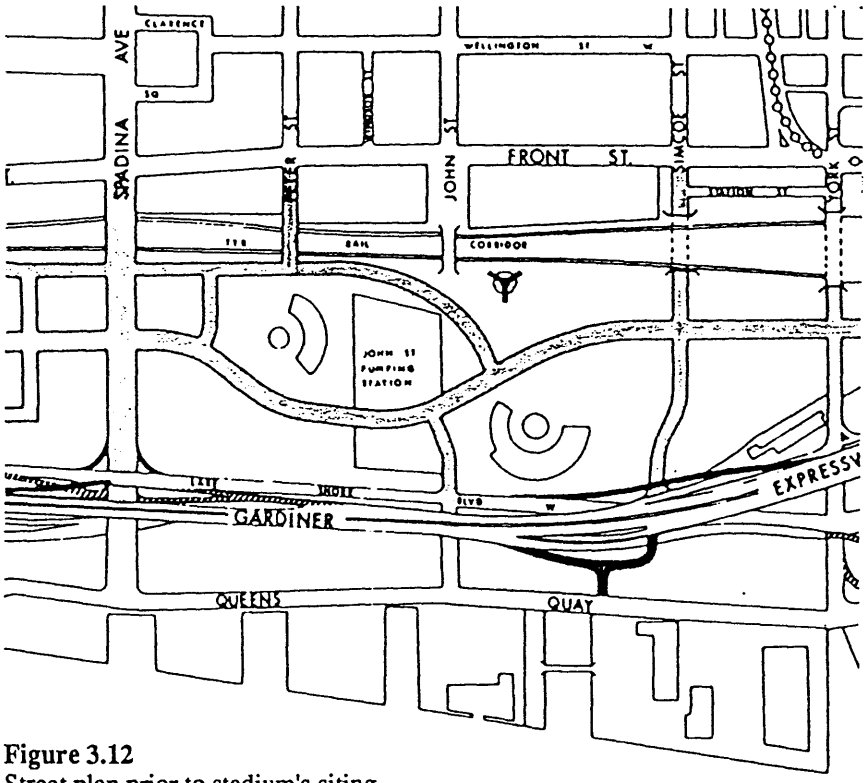

Figure 3.12
Street plan prior to stadium's siting
(City of Toronto Planning and Development Department)

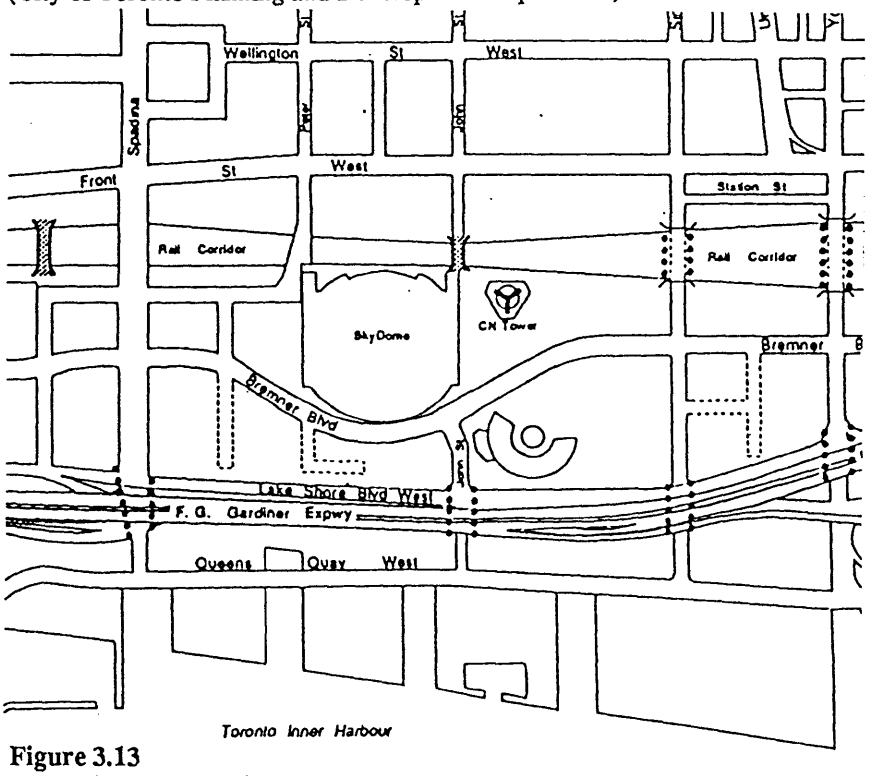

Figure 3.13
Street plan revised to incorporate SkyDome
(City of Toronto Planning and Development Department)

maintained though, serious reconsideration of the first post-stadium plan (1985); in particular of the spatial organization of land uses and the issues of urban design.

Major adjustments were made between the 1985 and 1991 plans on several grounds. It was the Planning Department's position, upon re-evaluation of the 1985 plan, the plan did not sufficiently consider the physical impact that the stadium would have on the Lands. For example, the density displaced by the stadium was reallocated in its entirety along Spadina Avenue. The 1991 plan review, however, points out that the subsequent massing "would have violated the cone of heights descending from the central area [downtown, to the east]"[62] Density was again reallocated or removed and height limits along Spadina Avenue were subsequently reduced "to protect the integrity of the landmark quality of the core."[63]

Other revisions in the planned form for the Railway Lands were predicated on the realization that, irrespective of the mission of achieving the City's objectives for the Lands, the uniqueness of -and social significance awarded to an athletic facility would invariably result in its affecting the definition of the area's character. In particular, the 1991 plan review emphasized that the provision of the stadium enhances the importance of public experience in the Lands; in its own right as a place of congregation, but also -as an addition to the Convention Center, CN Tower, planned central park and Union Station- because it reinforces the definition of the Railway Lands as a civic place.

The 1991 review therefore established principals emphasizing the definition of streets as the primary public venue. Indeed, Robert Gosse suggested that it is the city's intention that "the walk become part of the experience of going to the Dome."[64] To this end, guidelines were provided to enhance the pedestrian experience that would result form walking between Spadina Avenue sub-Centre, Union Station (the primary transportation node) and the stadium. These include streetscaping that "promotes the distinctive character

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[62]City of Toronto: March, 1991, p. 39

[63] City of Toronto: March, 1991, p. 152

[64]Gosse, Robert, Assistant Planner, City of Toronto Planning and Development Department, conversation, Jan. 29, 1992

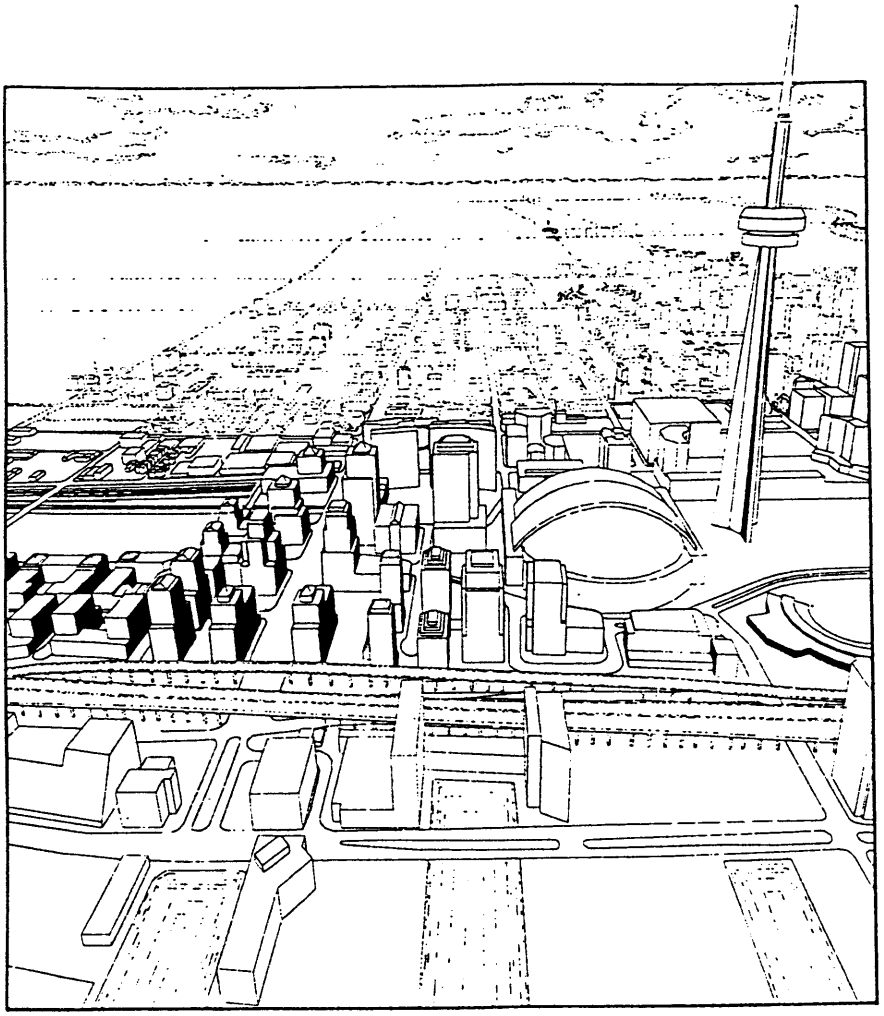

Figure 3.14
1985 massing scheme
(City of Toronto Planning and Development Department)

of the area [and] sets a new standard of quality for the City" in recognition of the out-of town visitors upon which the experience could leave a lasting impression, consistent alignment of building facades, and built-to lines with maximum and minimum street wall alignments to provide a sense of definition, volume and continuity to the streets. Functional guidelines include the provision canopies along building facades, and courtyard "crush" space immediately adjacent to the stadium. Animation of the well-sculptured public realm would come from the street-oriented commercial spaces.

Another group of urban design recommendations concern the adjustment of the massing schemes as conceived in the 1985 plan in proper respect for the stadium. The 1985

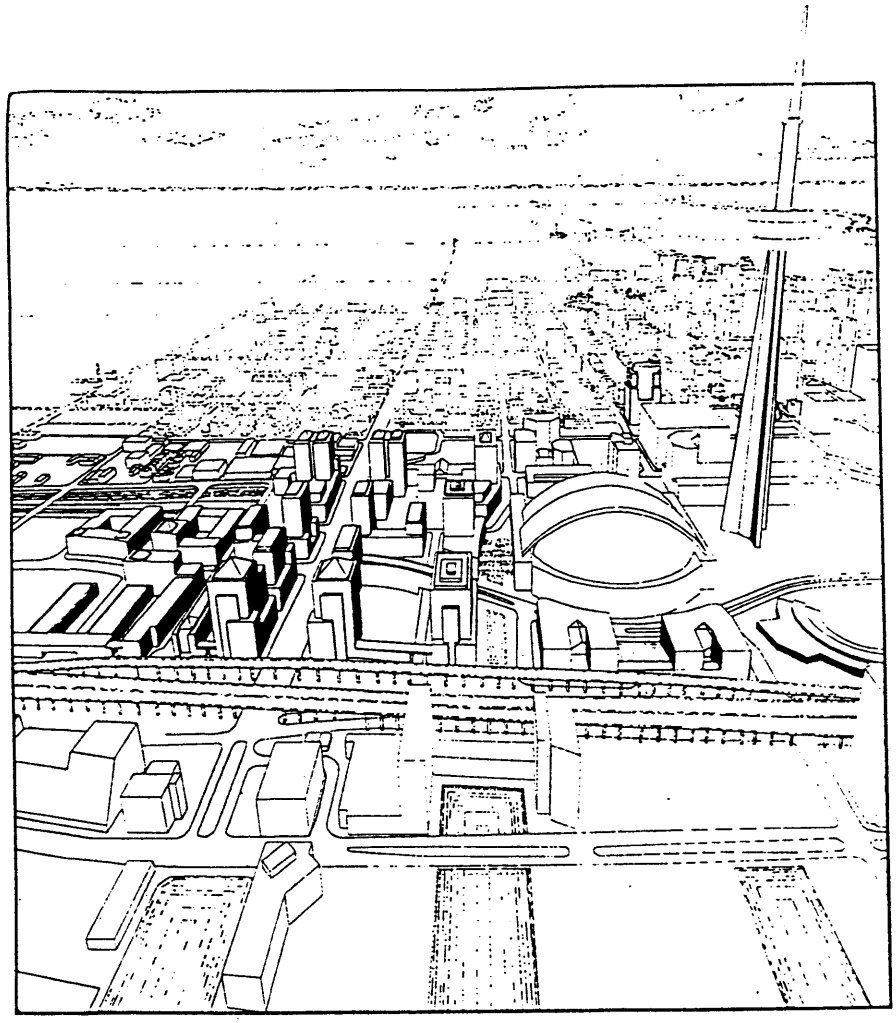

Figure 3.15
1991 massing scheme
(City of Toronto Planning and Development Department)

plan would have resulted in distorted views of the stadium[65], and was generally inconsistent with the landmark significance of the world's first retractable roof facility and with the aforementioned social significance awarded most stadia. In revising the 1985 massing proposal, the Railway Lands planners concentrated on framing and preserving views of the stadium, in particular the roof, from the Gardiner Expressway and Harbourfront to the south, and from the west along the Esplanade corridor (Compare Figures 3.14 and 3.15). Height limits for parcels adjacent to the stadium were decreased substantially, in order that no building rise above the lower lip of the stadium's retractable roof; note for example the two "gateway" buildings proposed in the 1991 scheme. An effective graduation of building

[65]City of Toronto: March, 1991, p. 39

heights have been achieved, such that they "step down" southward to the water and eastward to the stadium. The 1991 plan therefore seeks to achieve the sub-centre concept while providing a respectful, appropriate built context for this most prominent facility.

Retrospective Evaluations of the SkyDome Project

While participating in SkyDome's planning and design efforts, Stephen McLaughlin was the quintessential advocate of the urban stadium. He felt that it was the skepticism conveyed by Diamond and others that had relegated the stadiums to the suburbs for the past two decades, thereby wasting a potential asset. As Commissioner of City Planing, his position was that the stadium and all its activity would not only enable the city's objectives for the lands to be achieved, but would bring to the Lands a definitive sense of place . "That's what a city is. A city is noise and congestion and all kinds of things happening. If you don't like that, you can live in the suburbs, and have a front yard and all that stuff. It's all part of the hustle and bustle of the city."[66] Indeed, McLaughlin viewed the stadium as an opportunity to spur development of the Railway Lands, and as a way of generating a sense of place that would in turn enhance the attractiveness of the lands for prospective tenants and residents.

In hindsight, however, McLaughlin is not so sure these goals will be achieved, due largely to the design of the stadium -although he concedes Robbie did incorporate many of his concerns. While these may reflect the feelings of a disgruntled former City Commisioner, McLaughlin's views are not without merit and reflect common opinions about the stadium."SkyDome was made a lot shorter and thinner, but not as much as we would like."[67] McLaughlin continues to insist that the mitigation of grand and human scales was possible, but that this simply was not accomplished. "Our battles over SkyDome were about this... You can have a building of a huge scale that works at a tiny scale; so you can see it from miles away and it works, or you can see it up close and it

[66]McLaughlin, Stephen: Conversation, Jan. 27, 1992
[67]McLaughlin, Stephen: Conversation, Jan. 27, 1992

works. Whereas this thing reads from the Gardiner Expressway, but you go up to it and its still monumental."

He also suggests that the failure to mitigate the monumental with the urban, human scales was a casualty of politics; the Provincial government ignoring him and failing to influence Robbie in the initial design stages and the Mayor misconstruing McLauglin's contentions as a move to kill the project. "I didn't want to kill it. I was just saying 'Why don't you make it look nice?'"[68] Because they failed to respect his agenda of planning and designing a truly urban stadium, McLaughlin concludes that they are insufficient given the plans for the Railway Lands, and that SkyDome is therefore not the exemplary urban stadium that it might have been.

Thus, SkyDome as initially planned was a wondrous project: planned from the outset as a stretch beyond the limited imagination that constrained previous multi-purpose stadium efforts, a statement that urban appropriateness did not die with the passing of the Golden Age, and an example of how public and private sectors can come together to build a civic landmark. But SkyDome is also a lesson in all that can sway even the grandest and best intended schemes; that political and financial agendas can compromise or restrict efforts at planning urban stadia.

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[68]McLaughlin, Stephen: Conversation, Jan. 27, 1992

CHAPTER 4: Fitting the Stadium into the City

Figure 4.1
Pilot Field, Buffalo, NY
(Buffalo Development Companies)

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing planners and designers of urban stadia is the mitigation of their physical impacts. While "new-old" ballparks such as Oriole Park, Buffalo's Pilot Field (Figure 4.1), opened in 1988, and Cleveland's Gateway project (Figure 4.2); scheduled to open in 1994) would seem to suggest the only viable stadium design option in this respect, to not consider the efforts to mitigation SkyDome's physical impact would be inappropriate for several reasons. First, as traditional ballpark advocate Philip Bess has pointed out, the demand for traditional-style facilities is based on client needs; given that needs may vary ,"it is [therefore] not at all certain that ballparks will prevail over stadia."[1] The needs of Toronto's stadium proponents show that an outdoor, baseball-only stadium is not appropriate for all circumstances. Secondly, in addition to its roof, SkyDome incorporates other physical characteristics that differentiate it from its predecessors and that must therefore be properly evaluated.

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[1]Bess, Philip, City Baseball Magic, Minneapolis Review of Baseball, Madison, WI, 1989, p. 12

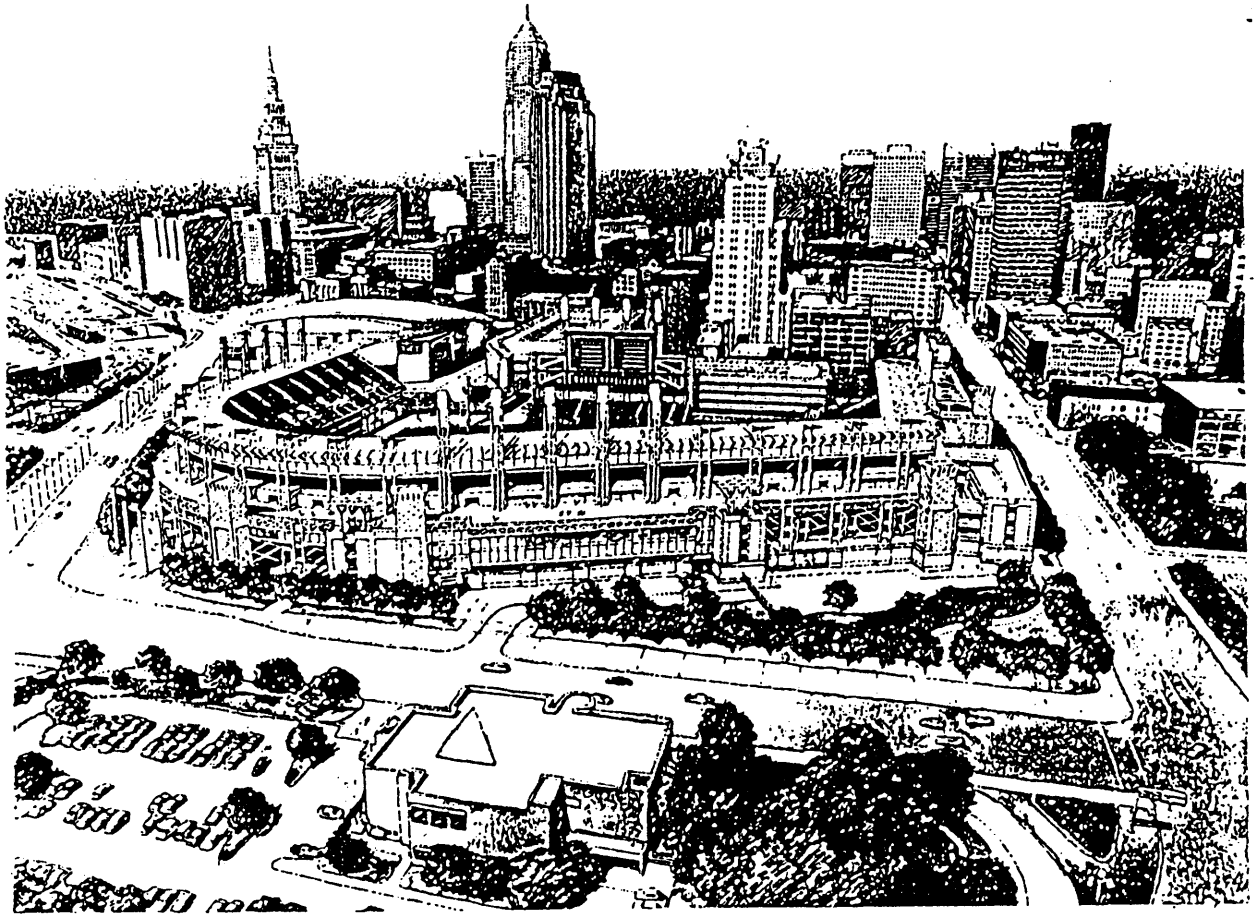

Figure 4.2
Cleveland's Gateway ballpark, to be completed by 1994
(HOK Sports Facilities Group)

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to assess how both conceptions of the urban stadium address the problem of shape and scale.

Shaping the Urban Stadium

Baltimore's Oriole Park is one of the latest in a tradition of urban stadia who's designers sought a replication of the Golden Age qualities of sensitivity and respect for the physical realm. The fundamental feature of Golden Age ballpark's sensitivity is clearly -as mentioned previously- their fit within the streets and blocks plan of their respective cities. Their confinement within the existing urban settlement patterns forces them to abide by the same restrictions as other urban buildings, and is therefore key to their "urban"

distinction. Aside from such functional consequences as vitalizing the adjacent areas and optimizing pedestrian accessibility, their tight fit suggests to observers -more than any other trait-the belonging of the buildings despite their purpose.

The fact that new-old projects have been able to replicate this critical characteristic has thus formed the basis of their appeal -a consequence not unanticipated by the Orioles organization. Since the Maryland Stadium Authority had acquired 85 acres of land, there was no particular dimensions to which Oriole Park was forced to conform. Indeed, a conventional modern, self-defined, circular shape had been assumed by the Stadium Authority and by the principal architects, HOK.[2] In advocating for a traditional-style facility, Orioles owner Eli Jacobs and his stadium design Vice President, Janet Marie Smith recognized that a key element to mitigating the stadium's physical presence would be to emphasize how the stadium might overtly display a respect for its environs; and that the most effective means of giving such an impression would be to impose the stadium's basic physical property -its shape- to the restrictions of the city.

Thus, Oriole Park was not only situated immediately adjacent to two primary streets, but further, Smith, Jacobs, and the stadium facility's planners insisted that it be restricted such that it not only avoid impact upon (i.e. demolition of) the warehouse, but that it permit the reintroduction onto the site of the previously eradicated Eutaw Street. Oriole Park's shape and its asymmetrical internal dimensions are thus a reflection of both the existing network and of the order originally dictated for the city.

The success of Oriole Park's in this regard is perhaps best understood when compared to other new-old projects that were shaped to supposedly achieve the same sense of modest physical impact. As the first stadium built in decades to conform in shape to the city's grid, Buffalo's Pilot Field -built four years prior to Oriole Park- is considered a landmark structure (see Figure 4.1). Although there is no sense that the city form was required to submit to the ballpark, neither is there as clear a sense of ballpark

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[2]Smith Jant-Marie, Vice President New Stadium Planning and Development, The Baltimore Orioles, Inc., Conversation, Jan. 23, 1992

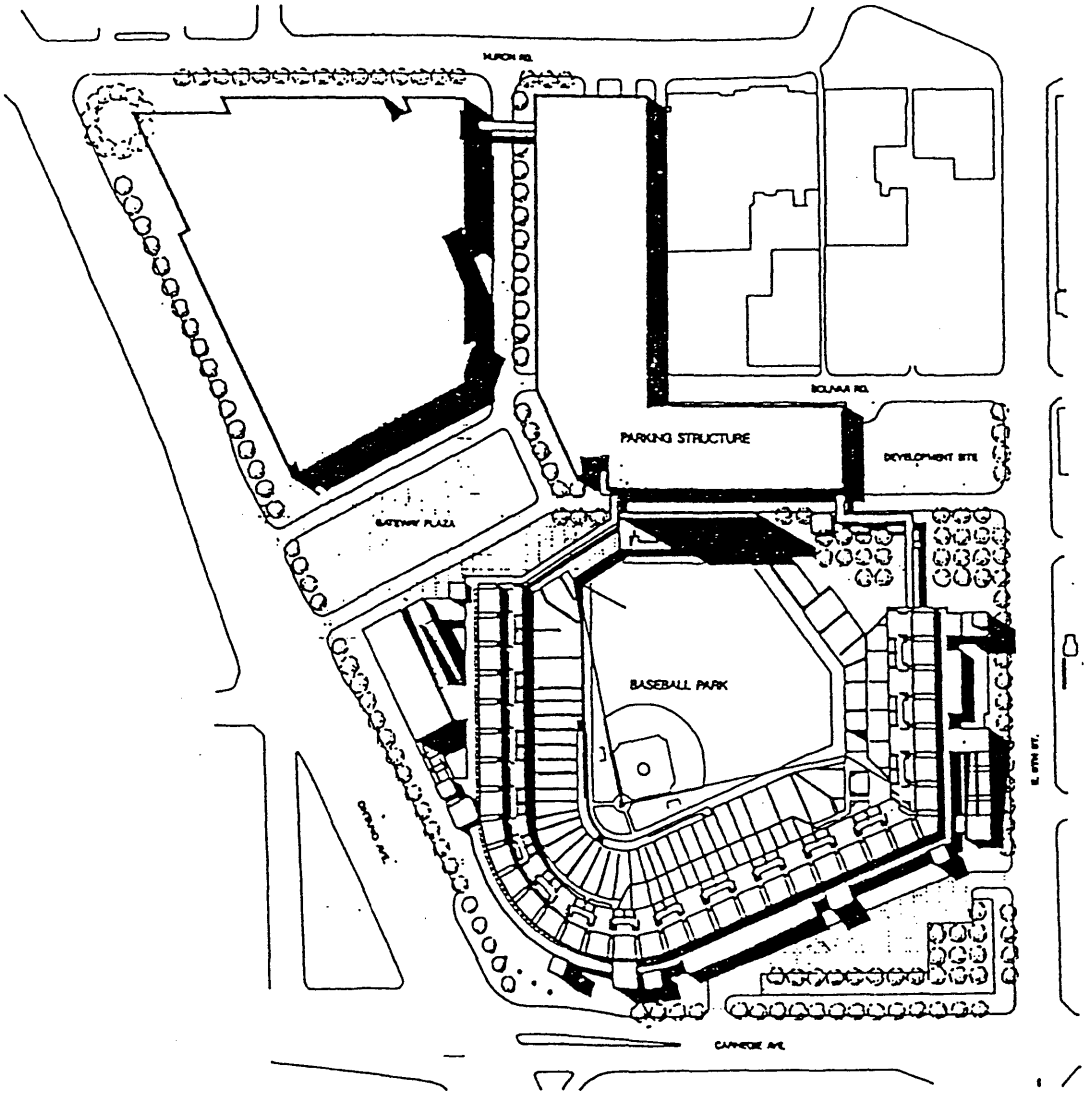

Figure 4.3
The Gateway Development Site
(Sasaki Associates)

responsiveness as is observable in Baltimore. In particular, the impression of the ballpark submitting to the city's restrictions is not portrayed in its interior dimensions, as the eccentricities typifying the interiors of traditional ballparks are not present here. The stadium's symmetrical seating bowl and "distressingly predictable"[3] playing surface remind one that the perceived sensitivity of a stadium relative to its surroundings is expressed as much in its internal as its external dimensions. Unlike any of the Golden Age ballparks or Oriole Park, Pilot Field's internal plan suggests that the fit of the ballpark on the allocated land was not truly challenging- that, unlike the Golden Age

[3]Bess, p.9

parks it seeks to emulate, it is not a "natural" response to its confines. One therefore wonders whether the decision to pursue a traditional style was one made by marketing staff and not by designers.

Cleveland's Gateway is perhaps a more convincing example of how a stadium's impact can be minimized when shaped in relation to the street grid. Restricted to 10.75 acres of land[4] (Figure 4.3), this ballpark will be oriented such that the eastern seating area is aligned with (and thus responsive to) to eastern street boundary, but curves around to abruptly terminate the view of a street on the western edge. Like Camden Yards then, Gateway is a facility who's minimal impact is reflected in both its external and quirky internal footprint.

New Comiskey Park (Figure 4.4), built in 1989, is also argued by its architects to have been penned in the mold of traditional ballparks - built to replace old Comiskey, baseballs oldest facility. But in fact, it is in looking at this facility that one truly appreciates the ability of Oriole Park, the Gateway (and even Pilot Field) to have been shaped by their surroundings. Foremost, the stadium is buried in a sea of parking that has converted streets into entrances. But the stadium (nay ballpark), regardless of parking, is decidedly un-urban. "Its form is unaffected by the [lot boundaries], except for 35th street over which it bridges to two ramps in a typical kind of anti-urban gesture."[5]

New Comiskey notwithstanding, the ability of new-old ballparks to conform to the same physical restrictions imposed upon Golden Age ballparks is most surprising when considering that the former represent not a total replication of the latter in ignorance of modern society, but rather an elaboration of them to include modern amenities. For, as Philip Bess notes, not all modern amenities are amenable to the patterns of urbanism that make possible their intimacy, character, and modesty.[6] But such features as sky boxes,

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[4]Sasaki Associates, Inc.: The Gateway Project: Urban Design Guidelines, May 9, 1991, p.11
[5]Bess, p. 33
[6]Bess, p. 23

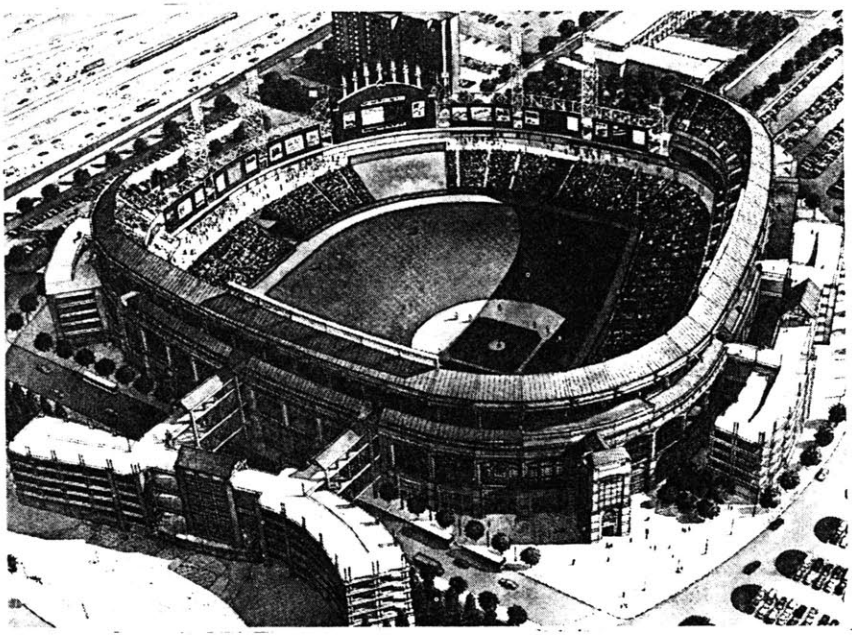

Figure 4.4
New Comiskey Park, Chicago
(Chicago White Sox publicity photo)

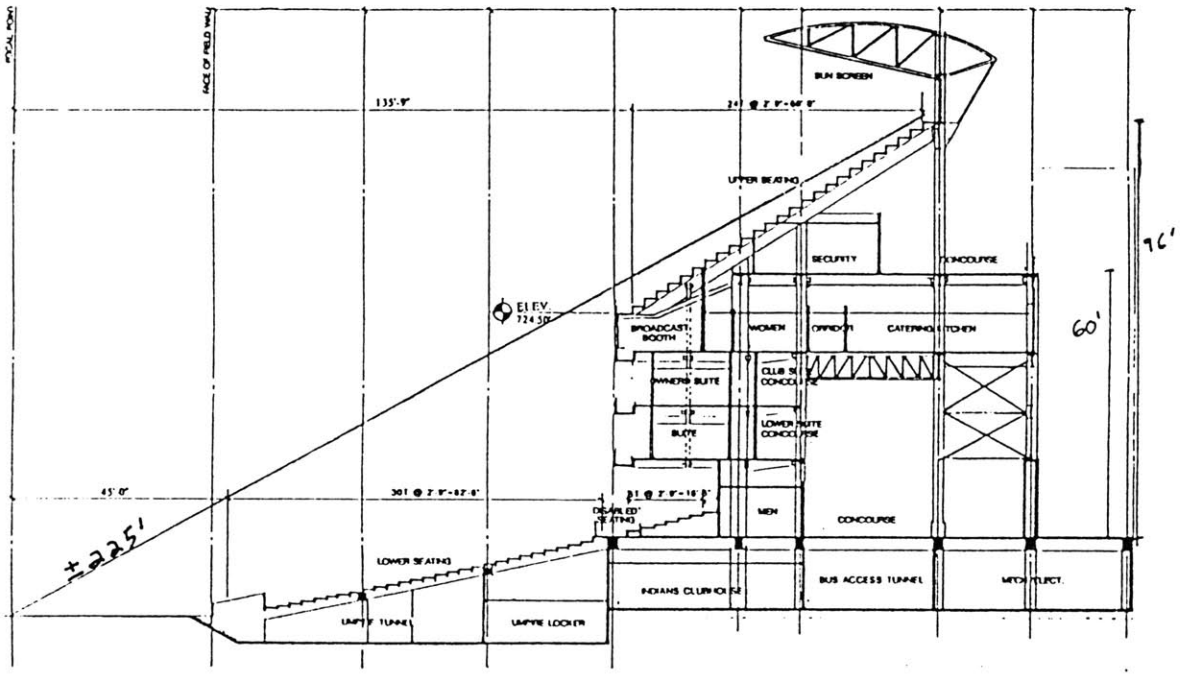

Figure 4.5
Section of the Gateway ballpark
(HOK Sports Facilities Group)

multi-tiered restaurants, and expanded concessions are nevertheless unavoidable given the revenue motive that drives new stadium construction.[7]

In this vein, the greatest challenge to the square footage needs of these new ballparks has been the demand for totally unobstructed views. While team owners, including Williams and Jacobs of the Orioles, have sought the application of the traditional aesthetic, none are willing to resort to the traditional ballpark characteristic of obstructed seating -for which a premium could not be charged. The design solution applied to Gateway and Oriole Park has been taken form the modern stadia: to build upper deck seating above and behind the lower seating rather than directly above it -thus eliminating the unruly support pillars. While this solution has contributed to the volume and expansiveness of modern stadia, the emergence of the new-old movement -the desire for internal intimacy and conformity to existing site boundaries- has forced designers to restudy the arrangement. The Gateway architects, according to preliminary plans, seem to have arrived at a plausible concession (Figure 4.5) as they were able to fit an entirely unobstructed seating arrangement in less than 11 acres of land while achieving a level of intimacy somewhere between close confines of traditional ballparks and the cavernous sense of post-war and modern stadia.

While the responsive shape has become the trademark of the new-old ballparks' urbanity, the issue was also given considerable attention in the planning of SkyDome. Upon the announcement that the Robbie scheme had been selected, a series of meetings were held "to review the design and to express the City's concerns about the proposal" -one of the greatest concerns being the stadium's shape.[8]

Indeed, when convened, the stadium's designers and city planners were in disagreement over the spatial needs for the stadium. Former Commissioner McLaughlin

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[7]Bess, p. 27

[8] City of Toronto.: Railway Lands Part II: Final Report on Rezoning Application for Precinct 'A', City of Toronto Planning and Development Department, Jan, 1986, p. 12

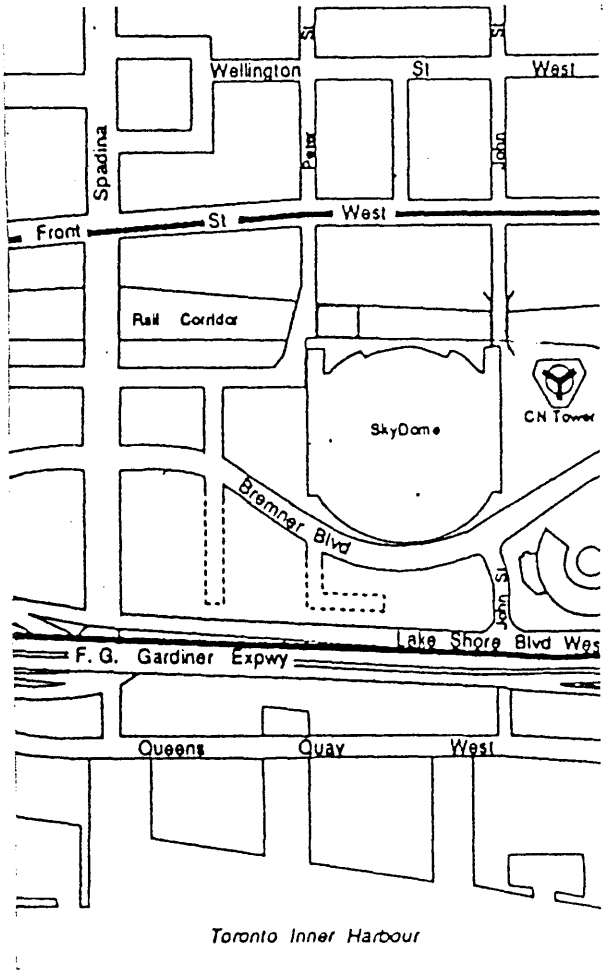

Figure 4.6
Street plan following SkyDome's siting
(Stadium Corporation of Ontario)

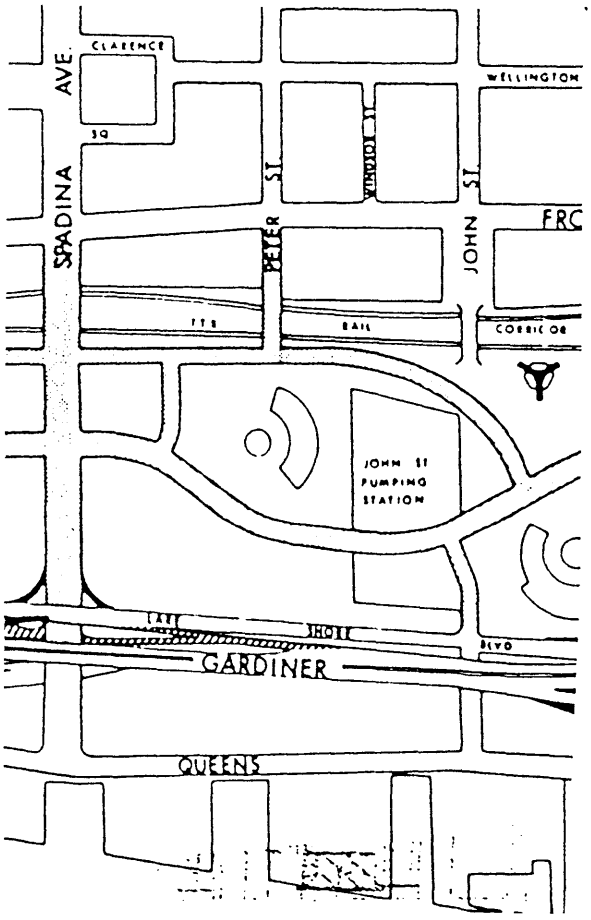

Figure 4.7
Street plan prior to SkyDome's siting
(Stadium Corporation of Ontario)

based his support of a Railway Lands stadium -in part- upon its fitting within the city grid dimensions that were ultimately to be applied to the Lands. His basic objection to Robbie's initial conception was that "the stadium was too fat" in that, like all stadia built in the decades, it would substantially disturb the intended circulation patterns. Robbie, to the contrary, insisted that the site was far too small to house a facility of such magnitude. Ultimately, a compromise was reached whereby Robbie agreed to constrict the eastern edge of the stadium so as to effectively terminate John Street, while -at the northwest corner, the city agreed to realign the right angle bend in the Peter Street extension onto the Land (Figure 4.6).[9]

The fact that the sides would reach a compromise on the building's shape is perhaps a failure when compared to new-old projects, but SkyDome suggests progress relative to the totally insensitive stadia of the previous two decades. Robbie was ultimately restricted to 12 acres of land, and it in facts fits into the planned Railway Lands street pattern. The problem, however, is that this does not appear to be the case, given the pre-planned configuration of the roadways (Figures 4.6 & 4.7). A comparison of the pre and post-stadium street plans show that the Esplanade's curve for example was pre-planned, while John Street to the stadium's northeast was never planned for extension onto the lands beyond pedestrian access; details reflecting the previously intended maintenance of a regional water pumping station on the stadium site.

Thus although such was not the case, it appears as if SkyDome dictated these alignments; the stadium's sought-after sensitivity consequently suffers. The City's efforts therefore suggest that modern stadia *can* be shaped to respect the existing or planned urban street fabric, but -unlike what is evidenced with SkyDome- the shaping of the stadium by the streets needs to be entirely perceptible in order to achieve an impression of minimized impact.

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[9] CIty of Toronto, Jan, 1986, p. 13

The Problem of Scale

While new-old ballpark designers have labored with the challenge of replicating as much as possible the configuration of Golden Age ballparks, so to have they attempted to replicate their urban scale.

This was achieved during the Golden Age largely by restricting the street-side elevations of the ballparks to heights of roughly 50 feet, in conformance with those of surrounding structures. Beyond this height, the remaining elevation, which varies in Golden Age parks form roughly an additional 20 to 50 feet, have been set back substantially (see Figures 4.8 & 4.9). Cleveland's Gateway boasts a quite comparable elevation of 96 feet, with 20 foot setbacks at the 60 foot mark (Figure 4.10) Similarly, Oriole Park's architects labored to restrict the height of the facility to that of the warehouse (roughly 100 feet),[10] and have set the stadium back above roughly the 70 foot mark.[11]

As was the case with their shape, the fact that most new-old stadia have been able to replicate the familiar scale of traditional ballparks is surprising given their modern program. Compare the simplicity of Tiger Stadium's profile (Figure 4.9) to the complex Gateway section (Figure 4.10), where loges, club seating and other provisions add three decks to the building. As the sections also show, the means by which this added height is hidden is to submerge the new-old facilities below the ground surface. Indeed, both Oriole Park and Gateway will be built roughly 16 feet below grade.[12] [13] Oriole Park in addition will house a substantial portion of its ancillary functions, including service entrances and docks, below ground.

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[10]RTKL Associates, Inc.: Master Plan Progress Report: Camden Yards Sports Complex Development Plan for the Maryland Stadium Authority, Nov. 8, 1988, p. 3.46

[11]RTKL p. 4.58; this represents preliminary design guidelines.

[12]Paull, conversation, Jan. 20, 1992

[13]Hellmuth, Obata, & Kassabaum, Sports Facilities Group: The Cleveland Indians Baseball Park, for the Gateway Economic Development Corporation, September 5, 1991

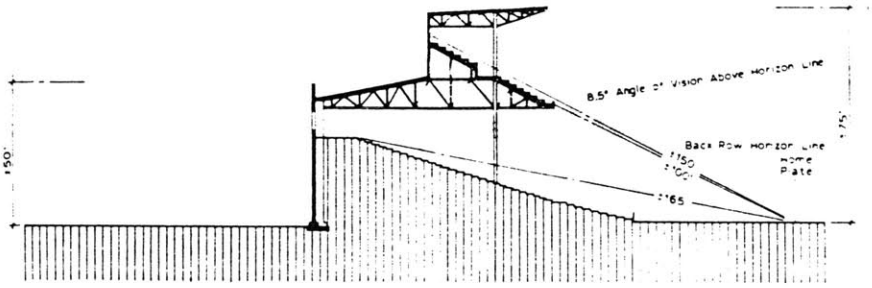
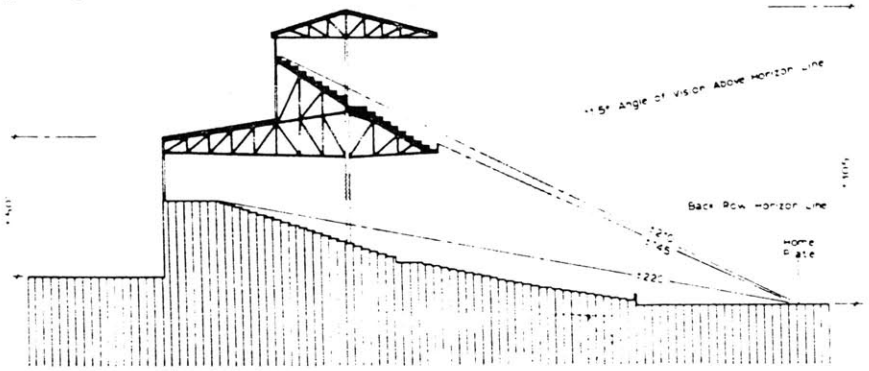


Figure 4.8
Sections of Comiskey Park (top) and Wrigley Field (Philip Bess)



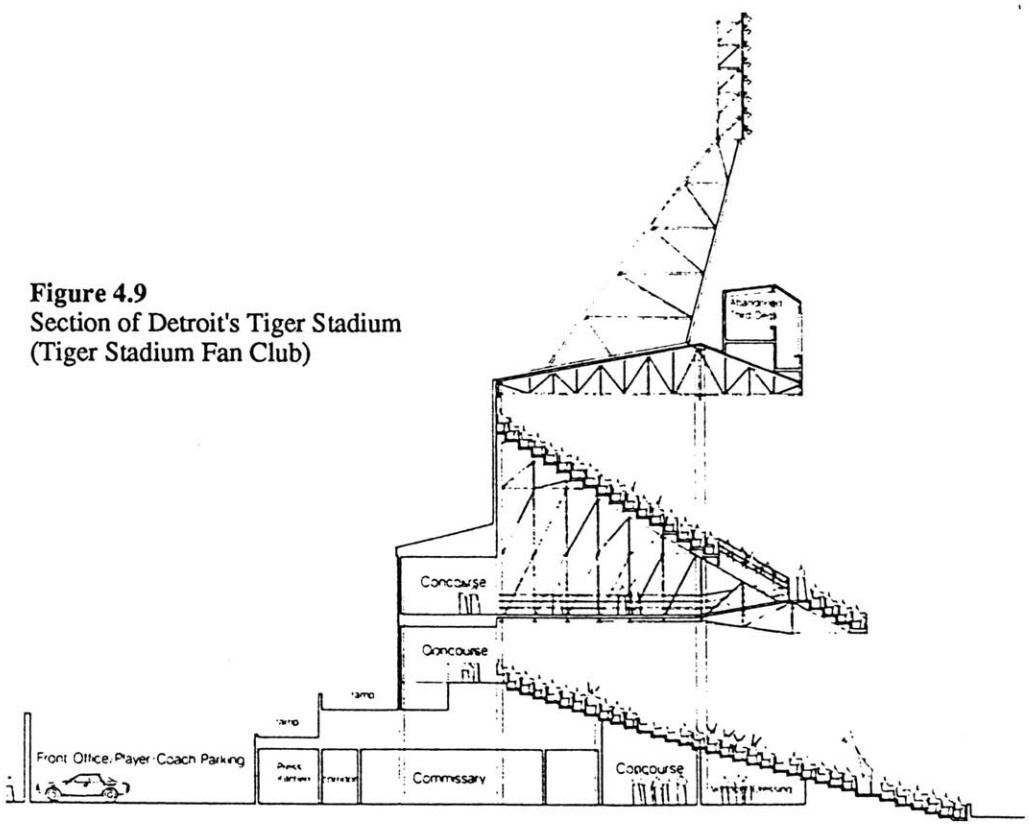


Figure 4.9
Section of Detroit's Tiger Stadium
(Tiger Stadium Fan Club)

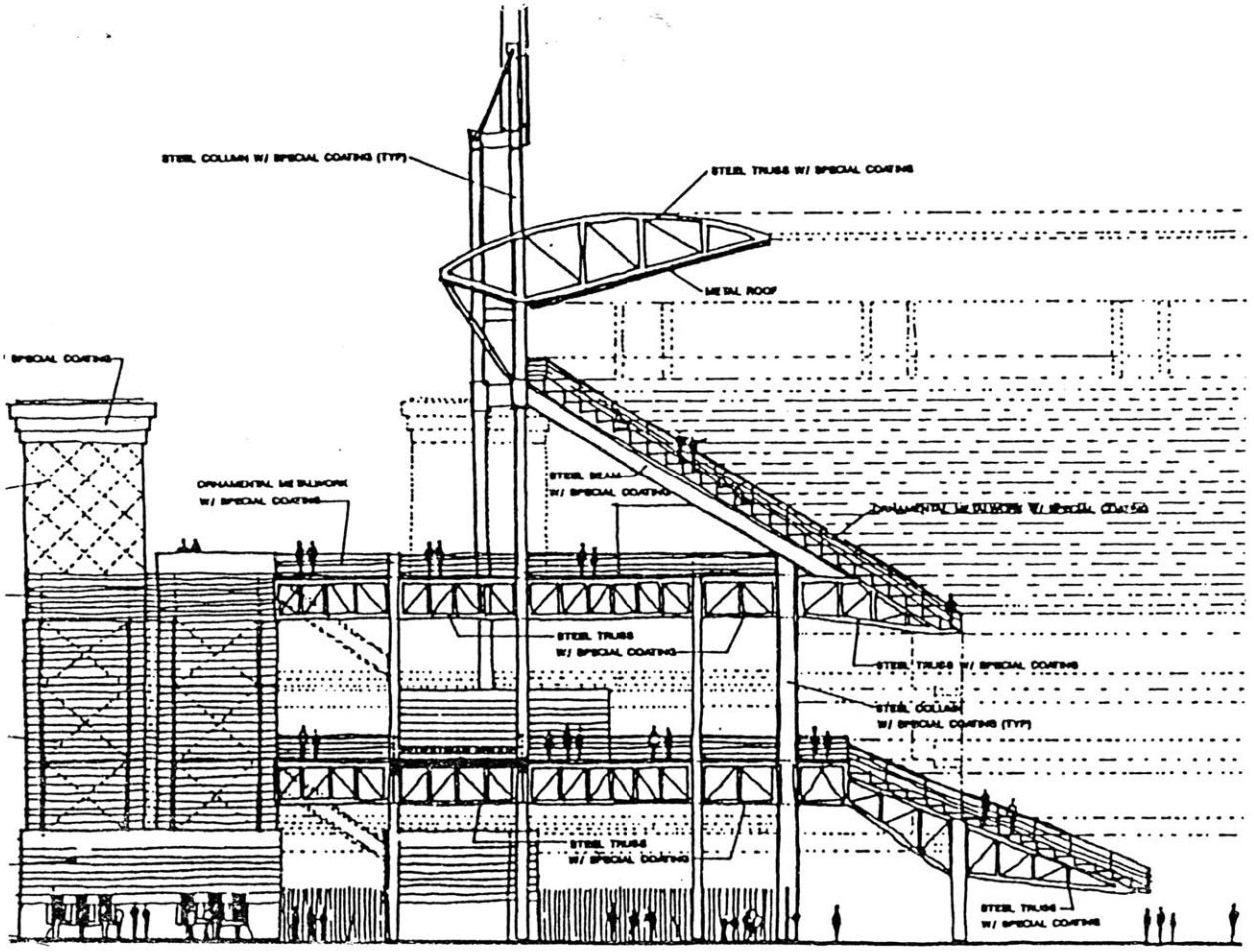


Figure 4.10
Gateway's seating bowl is set-back well within its footprint
(HOK Sports Facilities Group)

The design of elevations consistent in scale with surrounding urban buildings therefore provides the opportunity for new-old stadia -like other buildings- to positively influence the sense of space in the adjacent public realm. Pilot Field, for example, is pressed directly against the adjacent street and coupled buildings on the opposite side of the street, give it a definitive sense of volume. The affect has been labeled "a testament to streetscaping."[14] Similarly, the eastern bleacher section of Cleveland's gateway will be set back only 30 feet from East 9th street's curb,[15] responding -like any building- to the setbacks of other buildings along the street and thus extending the street's vertical edge.

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[14]Muchnick, Irvin: "Rich Makes His Pitch", New York Times Magazine, July 30, 1989, p.24
[15]Sasaki Associates, Inc, p. 11

Figure 4.11
Expanded Russell Street corridor
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

Oriole Park is perhaps the least successful at such a relationship, as the Russell Street corridor -expanded to create a barriere betweenthe ballpark and the Ridgley's Delight community- forces a large setback of the building, leaving a wasteland between the ballpark and the street (Figure 4.11).

Gateway's western edge is perhaps the best example, though, of how a sports facilities mass can be molded to respond to the street (Figure 4.12). Rather than following the dimension of the seating bowl, the exterior is guided in its shaping by Ontario Street. Architects have cleverly peeled the exterior ramps and office space from the structure -again such that the ballpark adheres to the setbacks existing along the street.

Like the Oriole Park project and the Golden Age ballparks before it, both the Buffalo and Cleveland projects have articulated their urban scale street elevations with distinctly urban detailing to further minimize the impression of the facilities as anything

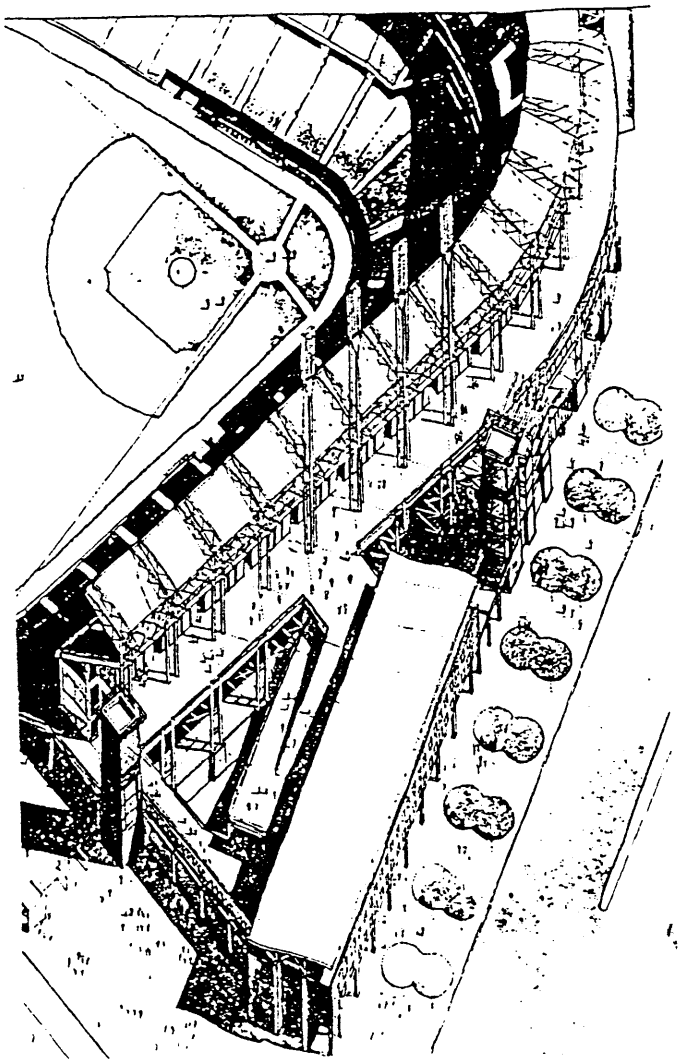

Figure 4.12
Gateway's edge along Ontario Street
(HOK Sports Facilities Group)

more than buildings. And in true traditional fashion, these detail were drawn from the local vernacular. Pilot Field's designers, for example, have gone so far as to incorporate limestone gargoyles similar to those found in the adjacent Ellicot historic district.

The Gateway in Cleveland borrows another effective design approach from Oriole Park: wrapping its masonry facade around much of the massive walkway ramps to further muffle the facilities scale (Figure 4.13). Here, both ballparks seem to have drawn on lessons provided by new Comiskey (see Figure 4.4), where the walkways appear as ungainly appendages. The independent appearance of these massive structures, with their distinctly modern texture, undermine the designers' stated intentions of seeking a

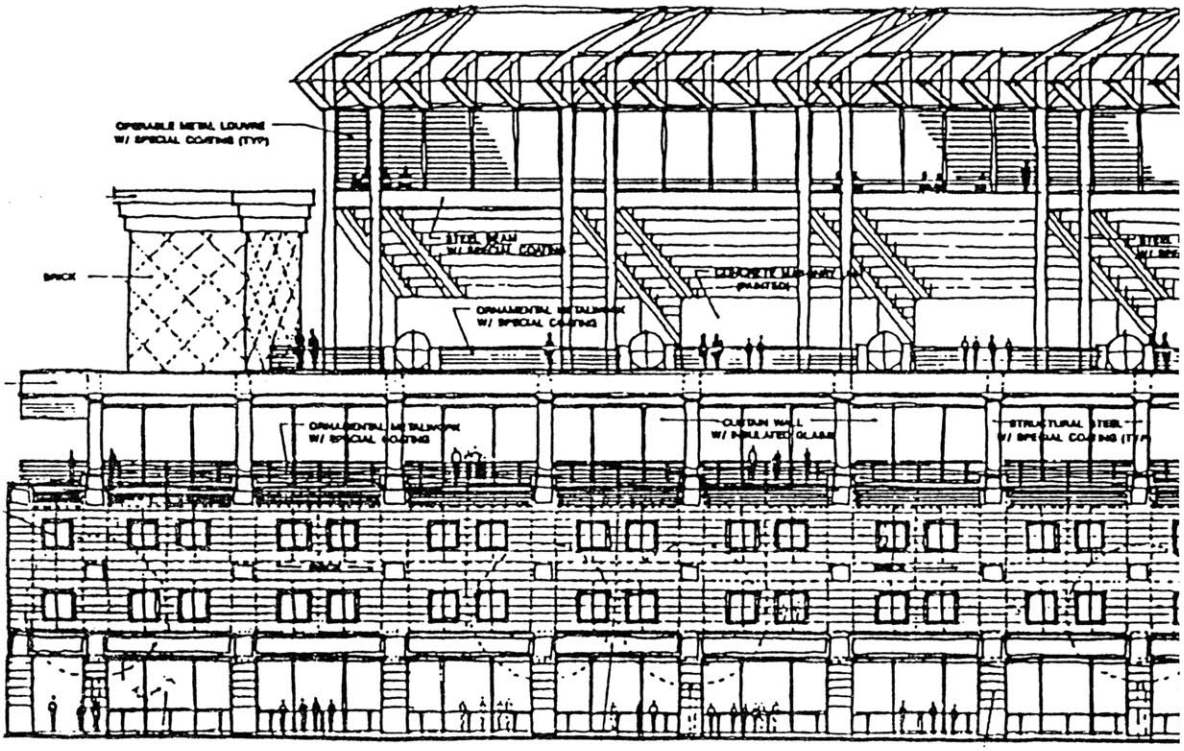

Figure 4.13
Elevation along Ontario Street
(HOK Sports Facilities Group)

traditional, urban scale, while hiding from view almost all facade treatments that were applied.

While scale considerations are effective in moderating the presence of the ballparks, they are not at all a startling element of their design given the nostalgic approach of the new-old movement. What is far more surprising -if not successful- was the similar consideration given to SkyDome's facade.

As was the case with SkyDome's ultimate shape, the appearance of its elevations represent a compromise between Robbie's initial conception and the city's desires. Figure 4.14 shows the elevation on Robbie's original design, resembling more a spaceship (and thus almost all other contemporary stadia's facades) than an urban structure. The city

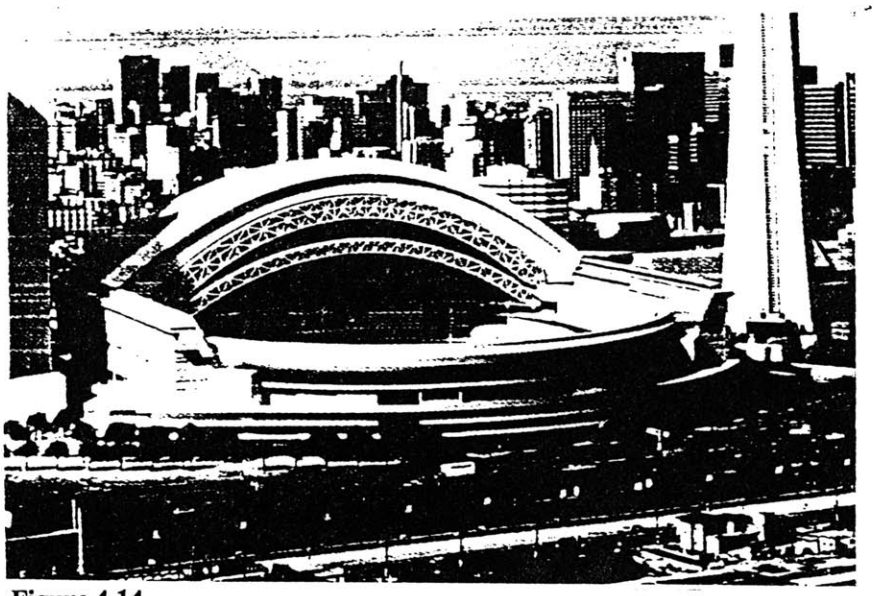

Figure 4.14
Early conception of SkyDome's facade
(RAN Consortium)

countered by proposing that the elevations be made more compatible with the facades of the Land's other future buildings.[16]

As with the roof, SkyDome's facade sets it apart from previous multi-purpose and domed stadia; if only to suggest what is possible. But while the initiative to create an urban-friendly facade is commendable, and will help in relating the structure to its future surroundings, the final solution is not successful in that the details are not enough to give the building human scale.[17] Although arguably "handsome and... attentively detailed",[18] SkyDome's facade may be insufficient in both quality and quantity to give the building an urban essence in this regard.[19] Nevertheless, the building suggests a respect for the urban context unforeseen in a facility of such magnitude. As such, the success of the facade detailing may lie in setting the lower bounds for future urban stadia and dome projects.

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[16] City of Toronto: Railway Lands Part II: Final Report on Rezoning Application for Precinct 'A', City of Toronto Planning and Development Department, Jan, 1986, p. 13

[17] McLaughlin, Stephen, former Commisioner, City of Toronto Planning and Development Department, conversation, Jan. 20, 1992

[18] Goldberger, Paul; "Double Header in Toronto: Batter Up, Top Down", New York Times, July 16, 1989, p. H29

[19] Diamond, A.J. "Domed Stadium, Toronto" Canadian Architect, May, 1989, p.34

Thus, considerable attention was given to issue of making SkyDome, an unprecedented modern sports facility, as urban friendly as possible. Not only then does its existence suggest that multi-purpose, covered facilities are not an obsolete concept, but SkyDome shows -despite its own insufficiencies- what might be possible in attempting to mitigate the physical presence of future modern stadia. Paul Goldberger, New York Times architecture critic insists "as urban context goes, this place is a good bit better than most new stadiums." [20]Unfortunately, efforts to mitigate SkyDome's physical impacts appear to be exactly what they are, compromises, and the physical impact of the stadium's shape on the surrounding street grid appears -to SkyDome's misfortune- to be forced. One can only wonder how SkyDome would be perceived had the city's concerns been addressed earlier in the design process.

Although each has its various strengths and weaknesses, the new-old projects, including Oriole Park, also provide lessons about how the design of outdoor baseball facilities could serve to minimize their monumentality while optimizing their presence. Indeed, one lesson that can be drawn from these projects is that to define a facility as 'of the traditional style' is insufficient in itself. Together the new-old ballpark projects suggest what design applications are possible, which are effective, and equally important, which should be avoided in shaping and scaling the ballpark to fit the urban environment.

[20]Goldberger, July 16, 1989, p. H29

CHAPTER 5: Stadium Location

Perhaps the most valuable lessons that can be drawn for both the SkyDome and Oriole Park projects relate to the characteristics of their sites, as the problem of siting an urban stadium are a challenge to any stadium project. It is not merely an issue of replicating the physical location of existing, successful urban stadia. One must recall that many of the stadia we consider to be time-honored urban places were, at the time of their construction, built in burgeoning neighborhoods and have therefore helped to define the early character of the surroundings. By contrast, to stamp a stadium into the aged urban landscape forces well established social and economic patterns of activity to be altered dramatically.

In addition, what North Americans envision as 'the good city' and the policies adopted to achieve these visions have changed markedly since the building of our revered Golden Age ballparks.[1] It was not until the last of the traditional ballparks had been built that landowners and residents across urban America had become so disappointed with the effect of unbridled development on land values and on the quality of life that they would adopt such rational measures as zoning and land use planning.

The challenge of successfully siting a stadium within the city today is therefore great. Oriole Park, SkyDome and other new stadia show that, for many reasons, urban centers may provide an excellent context in this age of stadium planning. The purpose of this chapter then is to suggest the qualities of downtown locations that made these projects feasible.

Access Advantages of Downtown Sites

Although widely assumed to be the biggest drawbacks associated with downtown sites, issues of accessibility have shown to be the greatest virtues of both the SkyDome and Camden Yards projects. Benefits include a demand outside of events for any facilities

[1]Bess, p. 23

that would need to be constructed in support of the stadia, and the opportunity to capitalize on existing transportation infrastructure. These benefits and others are evidenced in both vehicular and mass transit provisions for SkyDome, Oriole Park, and other new, centrally located facilities.

Mass-Transit Opportunities of Downtown Sites

The most prominent advantages shared by both the Railway Lands and Camden Yards, in the choice of the two sites, was the services available to both given their adjacency to the Central Business District. Perhaps the most crucial of these services is the extensive centrally-oriented mass transit networks -the importance of which goes beyond generally superior site access. Indeed, it is integral to the urban stadium's fundamental equation, as any improvements in mass-transit accessibility to a stadium lead to shifts of the modal split away from the automobile, reducing land required for parking and thus enhancing the financial feasibility of a downtown stadium. Thus, both Oriole Park and SkyDome expose as a myth the idea that stadia by definition are in need of huge tracts of land and, therefore, need be located in the suburbs. Rather, they imply that stadia of the automobile age hoard land for parking *because* they are in the suburbs, and that for reasons of efficient land usage, downtown transit capabilities should therefore be capitalized upon.

Although both SkyDome and Oriole Park capitalize on their respective cities existing transit provisions, they do nevertheless differ with regards to relative accessibility. While the Camden Yards case may present a seemingly ideal transit access scenario[2], one apparent drawback of providing on-site mass transit is that, to some extent, it will negate one of the economic rationales that Evans Paull and economists suggested renders an urban site advantageous. While one can envision, in the Toronto case, stadium patrons being drawn to commercial establishments between the stadium and transit

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[2]Aun, Leslie: "New Orioles Stadium to Draw Major D.C. Dollars", Washington Business Journal., Apr. 1, 1991

stations at Union Station and Spadina Avenue both before and after games (upon development of the Railway Lands), a large proportion of fans accessing Oriole Park in Baltimore will not be required to walk past any off-site establishments; although some are likely to alter their direct routes to take in favorite establishments or perhaps some of the nearby tourist attractions. But given "the economists warnings"[3] to plan environments to capture stadium traffic, (although seemingly inconceivable) Oriole Park might have been sited too close to public transit to achieve its full economic potential.

The ability of a stadium to utilize the city's existing transit system is an issue that should be factored into site selection decisions, but as both of these projects have shown, it is doubtful that such use can occur without improvements to the system. But both also show that improvements to central transit facilities in conjunction with a stadium project give efficient returns, as the improvements will be appreciated by thousands of urbanites outside of event times or seasons. In particular, the transit provisions at Camden Yards were substantially upgraded -the project, in fact, gave incentive to initiate the city's LRT project, which will begin operations on Opening Day.

Vehicular Access and Parking

While both SkyDome and Camden Yards are served by centrally oriented transit routes that improve accessibility and will diminish automobile usage, existing automobile access is nevertheless a major advantage shared by both central sites. This advantage is manifest in two ways. First, as was shown particularly in the Camden Yards case, major CBD's are already serviced by interstates and other highways with frequent access and egress points, designed to handle thousands of motorists in each direction on a daily basis. Consequently, the expenditures required to provide access to a downtown stadium will be minimal, particularly in comparison with the cost of improvements needed to access most suburban locations. Maryland Stadium Authority Deputy Director Edward

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[3]Bess, p. 16

Cline pointed out that, in the case of Oriole Park, the cost of the downtown property relative to suburban land was more than made up for in the difference between suburban and downtown automobile access improvement costs.[4]

The second attractive aspect of central site vehicular access is the issue of efficient expenditure of funds for improvements. As was the case with improved mass transit access to downtown stadium sites, both cases show that any improvements required will not only be used by stadium patrons, but also by the thousands of commuters who currently use the roadways. In Toronto, this point has been used to justify the Metropolitan Governments' $30 million participation in the project: Metro is the beneficiary of the Railway Lands' infrastructure including a new bridge for Spadina Avenue, rebuilt to include a streetcar line extension.

Extensive vehicular and mass-transportation facilities were major elements of the respective downtown sites' feasibility, but another element that makes the downtown stadium concept both plausible and attractive is the proximity of the sites to large existing parking reservoirs. Both SkyDome and Oriole Park will rely heavily on the large number of parking spaces that are within walking distance of the respective facilities. This not only reduces substantially the land requirements for the stadia, as parking need not be dedicated on site, but will allow for a more efficient dispersal of fans following games, as egress is not limited to one or two exists but is instead spread along an extensive street grid. Furthermore, the reliance on the existing reservoirs provides economic spin-off benefits for existing businesses. Parking lots and garages that have operated on revenues generated during the workday are now likely to increase their revenues substantially on game days, while businesses that may not charge for parking during the day will find a demand for spaces in the evenings and weekends during the seasons.

The availability and under-utilization of existing downtown parking reservoirs has been an issue in the decision to locate other recent stadia projects downtown. Although

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[4]Cline, Edward, Deputy Director, the Maryland Stadium Authority, Conversation, Jan. 21,1992

only half the design-capacity of major-league baseball stadia (19,000), planners of Buffalo's Pilot Field needed only to provide half of the necessary spaces on site (in an outfield garage; see Figure 4.1). Cleveland's Gateway ballpark (see Figure 4.3), like the Toronto's SkyDome, will provide virtually no on-site parking beyond executive and VIP spaces, relying almost totally on the CBD reservoir to the north.

Examples of zero on-site parking are, however, infrequent and not easily replicated, as the Baltimore case shows. One reason for this is logistical: the Maryland Stadium Authority's traffic consultant concluded that roughly 7,000 on-site spaces would be required despite the high modal splits and nearby downtown reservoir (5,000 were actually built but will likely disappear if the Stadium Authority builds a football stadium). Another factor is economics: The financial realities of contemporary professional sports also suggest that parking will be included in most future stadium programs, as owners include access to parking revenues as part of the favorable deals negotiated with cities or states. In Baltimore, for example, the Orioles will receive "all [on-site] parking revenues generated in connection with baseball-related events at Oriole Park."[5] It is thus easy to understand why Orioles' owner Edward Bennett Williams was not receptive to the City's recommendation of a Camden Yards site half the size of the current site.[6]

The issue of parking provisions is not one in which benefits are accrued only by the sports facilities though. Rather, one finds in the provision of on site parking, the same reciprocity characterizing vehicular and transit access provisions that would be unattainable in a suburban location. Edward Cline of the Stadium Authority anticipates future agreements with major downtown employers, including The University of Maryland (four blocks away), which is planning major expansions and has expressed interest in use of the lot for employee parking.[7] Other uses for the parking beyond

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[5]Maryland Stadium Authority; Baltimore Orioles, Inc.: Memorandum of Agreement Between the Maryland Stadium Authority and Baltimore Orioles, Inc., May 2, 1988, p. 12

[6]Cline, converstation, Jan. 20, 1992

[7]Cline, conversation, Jan. 20, 1992

stadium events are likely considering, in particular, its adjacency to transportation facilities and proximity to other downtown attractions and businesses.

Thus, what one finds in examining the Baltimore example is that facilities (that would be built as part of most stadium projects) bear special utility for the public given their construction downtown -as was the case with transit and highway provisions. But given that the parking is a revenue generating element managed by the Stadium Authority, having been built downtown, it has become a means by which the Stadium Authority can generate additional returns of the public's investment into the sports facility. Ironically, in this regard Oriole Park is following examples set by some of the modern stadia it seeks to displace. Cincinnati's Riverfront Stadium, built in 1968 developed 4,500 on-site parking spaces that are leased to downtown workers at $20 per month, as compared to rates five times higher for many downtown lots.[8]

The Baltimore and Toronto cases suggest other economic advantages that can result form using the utilization of a CBD's transportation facilities. The accessibility associated with the downtown sites (as opposed to suburban locations) allows the primary tenants to maintain their already strong regional followings while preserving the equally vital inner-city fan base[9] -an effect that will benefit both the teams and the respective municipalities. Both facilities, for example, are much closer to regional and national passenger train service than the facilities they replace. Oriole Park is in addition actually more accessible by automobile to its important regional base than Memorial Stadium: Virtually no navigation of city streets is required to access the former, while the latter is buried amidst a residential neighborhood in the middle of the city. Consequent to this improved access, the Maryland Department of Economic and Employment Development estimates that spending by out-of-state Orioles fans could double over the 1985 estimate of $36 million.[10]

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[8]Petersen, David: "Thinking About a Downtown Stadium for Baltimore", Urban Land, Sept. 1988, p. 21
[9]Petersen, p. 23
[10]Aun, p. 2

Compatibility with Existing Downtown Land Uses

Although the access advantages associated with a downtown site are extensive, they do not represent the full extent of downtowns' offerings. Both SkyDome and Oriole Park suggest that professional sports facilities also ought to be located downtown such that they may be integrated functionally with other uses traditionally located in urban centers.

As mentioned, in the case studies both projects add to their respective cities' already large number of centrally located tourist attractions. SkyDome, in particular is situated next to Toronto's most popular attraction, CN Tower; consequently, the two are effectively packaged as a single destination both during and outside of game times. Further, both the SkyDome and Oriole Park projects not only add to a mass of centrally located tourist destinations, but compared to the predominately residential suburbs, they are compatible with the ancillary functions, including hotel, dining, and retail activities that have evolved in support of these attractions.

The combination of dome and convention centers, another function traditionally located downtown, is an opportunity that has played a role in the siting of many recent dome stadium projects. Vancouver, for example, built B.C. Place as part of its 1986 World Exposition. More recently, St. Louis residents have approved construction of a $250 million facility that can converted from a convention center into a football stadium,[11] and Atlanta's Georgia Dome will be constructed adjacent to the World Congress Center (Figure 5.1). Perhaps the most successful venture of this type to date has been the Indianapolis Hoosierdome (Figure 5.2). The stadium was built primarily to attract a National Football League franchise (ultimately luring away Baltimore's Colts), but is also an integral element of the city's convention facilities. In addition to providing another 150,000 square feet of exhibition space, the dome shares management, staff, and parking with the convention center. This shared relationship not only improves the

[11]Deckard, Linda: "St. Louis to Construct Center That Converts Into Stadium", Amusement Business, v. 102, Apr. 16, 1990, p. 15

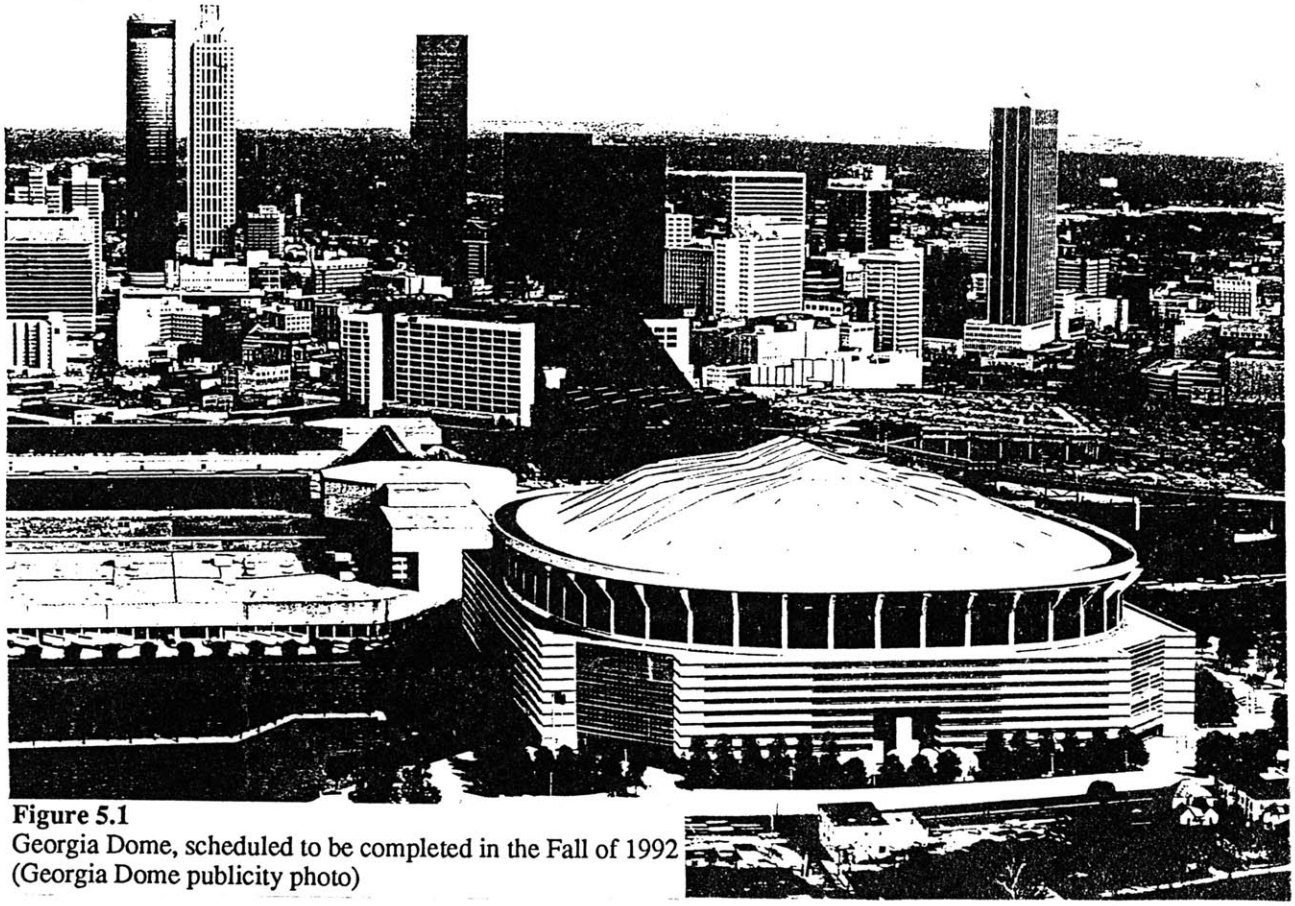

Figure 5.1
Georgia Dome, scheduled to be completed in the Fall of 1992
(Georgia Dome publicity photo)

Figure 5.2
Hoosier Dome, Indianapolis
(Editorial Research Reports)

attractiveness of both facilities, but allows the Hoosierdome to keep its debt servicing and operating costs much lower than those of other dome facilities.[12] Other advantages of shared dome-convention center projects are, particularly in the St. Louis case, that such a tie makes the dome a recipient of hotel/motel tax monies and other business tax income that would not logically support a sports facility.[13]

SkyDome achieves a similar relationship. As it is (at least optionally) a dome facility, it can also function in collaboration with the city's adjacent, 200,000 SF Convention Centre, which prior to the stadium's construction, had sought to expand. SkyDome's versatility enhances the Convention Centre's marketability by providing supplemental space up to an additional 200,000 SF, and can draw such space intensive uses as home and boat shows that would have been impossible to attract to the Convention Centre alone. Expositions attracted in collaboration with the Convention Centre comprise a substantial proportion of SkyDome's event dates and are therefore important to its annual operating revenues.

As an outdoor facility designed specifically for baseball, Oriole Park will not share the same collaborative advantages as downtown dome facilities, despite its location within two blocks of the Baltimore Convention Center. And although the Maryland Stadium Authority is expecting to build a dome for any football franchise acquired for the city, Edward Cline suggests that difficulties have already arisen in attempts to establish relations with the Convention Center Authority. For one, the fact that the dome -if constructed- would not be immediately adjacent to the Convention Center creates logistical problems; neither side is completely convinced of the ability of a shuttle service to effectively link the two facilities. Furthermore, Cline has says that the Center's authorities perceive a dome to be a competing facility and not as a growth opportunity[14] -these problems relative to other facility tandems suggesting that the key to cooperative

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[12]Petersen, p. 22
[13]Deckard, p. 15
[14]Cline, Jan. 22, 1991

operations (as in Indianapolis) may lie in combined management and immediate adjacency.

Siting a Stadium to Guide Downtown Development

In addition to taking advantage of (and enhancing) downtown transportation provisions and land uses, recent stadium projects, including SkyDome and Oriole Park have shown the ability to guide the growth of cities' central business districts.

Attracting Development

The fact that several sports facility projects have shown to be magnets to real estate development also signifies the importance of understanding how a sports facility can be sited to affect a cities' physical growth. The most widely cited example of this effect has been the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans, who's impact on the development landscape has been measured in several ways. Using increases in land values as a measure of real estate development, the Superdome has been found to have a positive effect on CBD land values for a distance of up to 2,200 feet, leading researchers to conclude "[n]o urban renewal project in the history of New Orleans is likely to have beneficially impacted a surrounding area as has the development of the Louisiana Superdome."[15]

The Superdome and other facilities have also been charged with affecting the location of office development with their ancillary functions, especially parking which, given the rarity of events scheduled during working hours, is available for outside usage. Portions of the parking requirements for the seven office buildings constructed near the Superdome between its opening in 1975 and 1985 have been satisfied by space available in the facilities garage. Specifically, the projects were collectively able to avoid building 4,460 spaces on-site; resulting in a higher yield of leasable office space and a construction

[15]Nebel III, E.C.; Ragas, W. R.; Ryan, T.P.: The Economic Impact of the Louisiana Superdome (1975-1985), Division of Business and Economic research, University of New Orleans, 1985, p. 17

savings of $42.4 million (1985).[16] Similar opportunities provided by Cincinnati's Riverfront Stadium have been central to the City's ongoing efforts to strengthen the CBD. Thus, while it is clear that any effect on real estate development fails to offset the Superdome's drain on the taxpayers,[17] and arguable whether either Riverfront Stadium or the Superdome has actually initiated the office projects (that office construction might have occurred irrespective of the stadia's construction)[18], it is clear that both stadium provided location incentives, suggesting that urban stadium site selections should reflect this potential affect.

Adapting Lands for New Development

Both the SkyDome and Oriole Park cases also suggest development opportunities for tracts of industrial properties that, given the emergence of the service sector economy, have grown obsolete and incompatible with growing central business districts; scenarios that currently exist throughout urban North America. Indeed, they "open the door" for expansion of their cities' CBD's onto these challenging sites.

Industry in Camden Yards for example, while operating successfully, contrasted with uses that might occupy adjacent, City-owned parcels along the western edge of the CBD (Figure 5.3). Replacing the northern portion of the industrial site with the ballpark serves to shield the remaining industry from the city's commercial areas and opens up new development opportunities for the area. "The stadium... is turning an area with an image of going downhill into an area that has an image of being a good place to invest."[19] Furthermore, according to one planner, replacing the industry in the northern edge of the site has increased the attractiveness of the City's vacant, adjacent parcels.[20]

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[16]Nebel et al. p. 19

[17]Petersen, David

[18]Lancaster, Hal : "Stadium Projects are Proliferating Amid Debates Over Benefit to Cities", Wall Street Journal, Mar. 20, 1987 p. 37

[19]Paull, conversation, Jan. 20, 1992

[20]Bose, Shubroto, Director of Architecture and Planning, City of Baltimore Development Corporation, conversation, Jan. 23, 1992

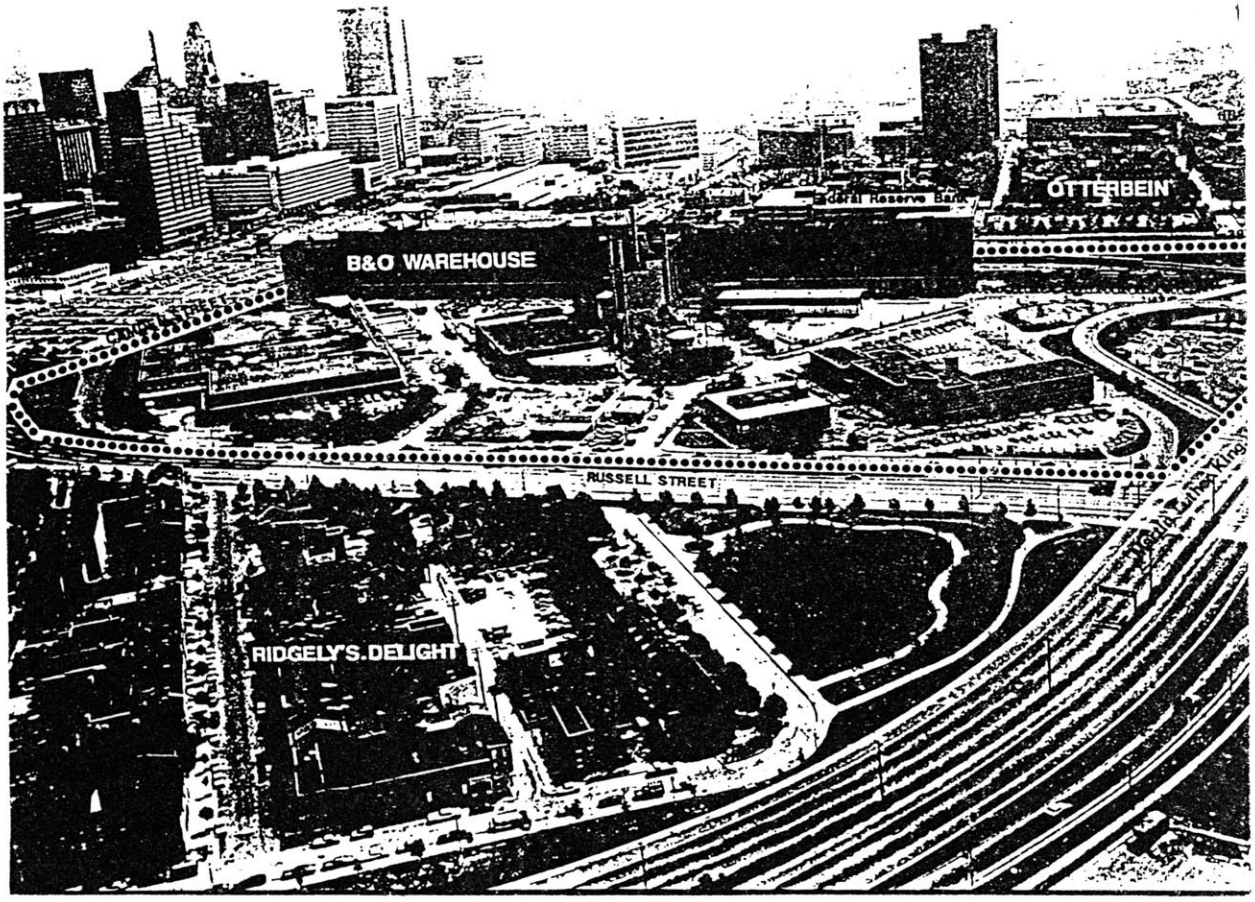

Figure 5.3
Industry in Camden Yards prior to the ballpark's construction
(Baltimore Planning Department)

In Toronto, the economic shift away from the once rich industrial sector towards the financial and tourist sectors has led to explosive growth of its central business district and waterfront, while simultaneously undercutting the utility of the Railway Lands. And as this shift has progressed, the Lands have grown increasingly obtrusive. As Stephen McLaughlin considered in his coordination of the planning of SkyDome and the Railway Lands, the stadium provided the vital first step in opening the Railway Lands to the city by acting as a bridge on the Lands between the downtown and the waterfront, and by initiating the clean up and infrastructure undertakings that had previously stifled development of the lands.

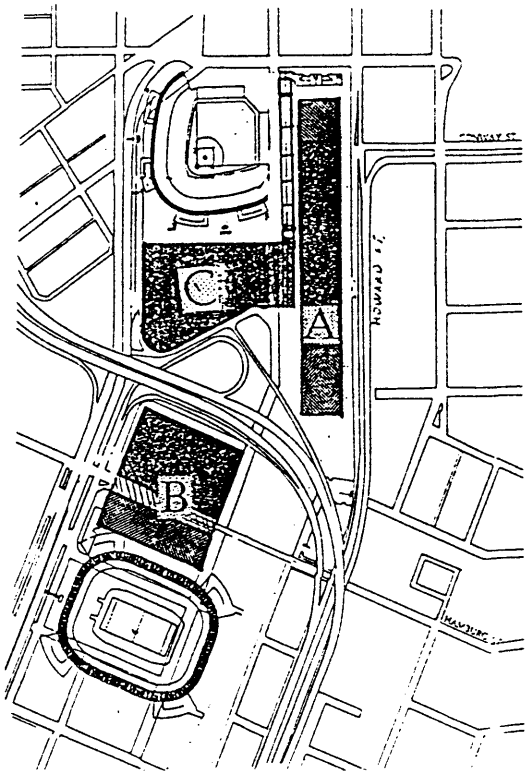

Figure 5.4
Camden Yard s on-site development opportunities
(RTKL Associates, Inc.)

Capturing the Benefits of Subsequent Development

While the 'magnet effect' has been anticipated in the planning of Oriole Park, the project brings an interesting elaboration of the concept: that much of the development attracted to the parking and other services can be captured on-site and can subsequently off-set (to some extent) the costs of the stadia. The Maryland Stadium Authority's long-term plans call for construction of a football stadium on the existing surface lot and relocation of some portion of the displaced parking into new on-site garages. But planners have also identified other development opportunities on site (Figure 5.4). By retaining parking on-site, the Sports Complex should, given proper market conditions, be able to attract development in much the same way that has been witnessed in Cincinnati and New Orleans. However, since the Stadium Authority holds title to the land, they could either

sell or lease it in an effort to help offset the costs of original land acquisition. (In addition, the on-site parking also will facilitate leasing of the 400,000 SF of office space in the renovated Camden Warehouse).

The stadium project and its ancillary facilities have also brought much attention to air-rights development possibilities for the area above the rail platforms, east of the warehouse (Figure 5.4; Zone A). Current plans call for a 2 million SF medical market /exhibition center, developed by the Stadium and Transportation Authorities that would also share space with an expanded convention center on the eastern side of Howard Street, and is likely to include a hotel in its program. While the facility seems to be a logical compliment to the convention center, some credit the stadium complex for its conception and location. "That kind of project would never have been discussed before [the ballpark's planning]"[21] -further testament to the importance of siting stadia with respect for the greater urban development implications.

Capturing development opportunities as part of the sports facility project has been proposed for other state-of-the art facilities and new-old ballpark projects. In Phoenix, developers included a multiple-use, retractable roof facility as one element of a 66 acre mixed-use project. While the City would have been obligated to donate the land in the deal, the developer contended that including the stadium as merely one element of a larger project would allow a total exclusion of public funding for the stadium.[22] Cleveland's traditional-style Gateway ballpark provides another example (Figure 5.5). The ballpark is in fact merely the anchor of an economic development initiative for the site that will, in addition, provide developable lots. The entire project was laid out "to respond to market forces" of the CBD bordering to the north.[23]

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[21] Paull, conversation, Jan. 20, 1992

[22] Engdahl, Lora: "Pursuing Private Development: The Ganis Game Plan", Facility Manager, Summer, 1986, p. 11

[23] Sasaki Associates, Inc.: The Gateway Project: Urban Design Guidelines, May 9, 1991, p. 24

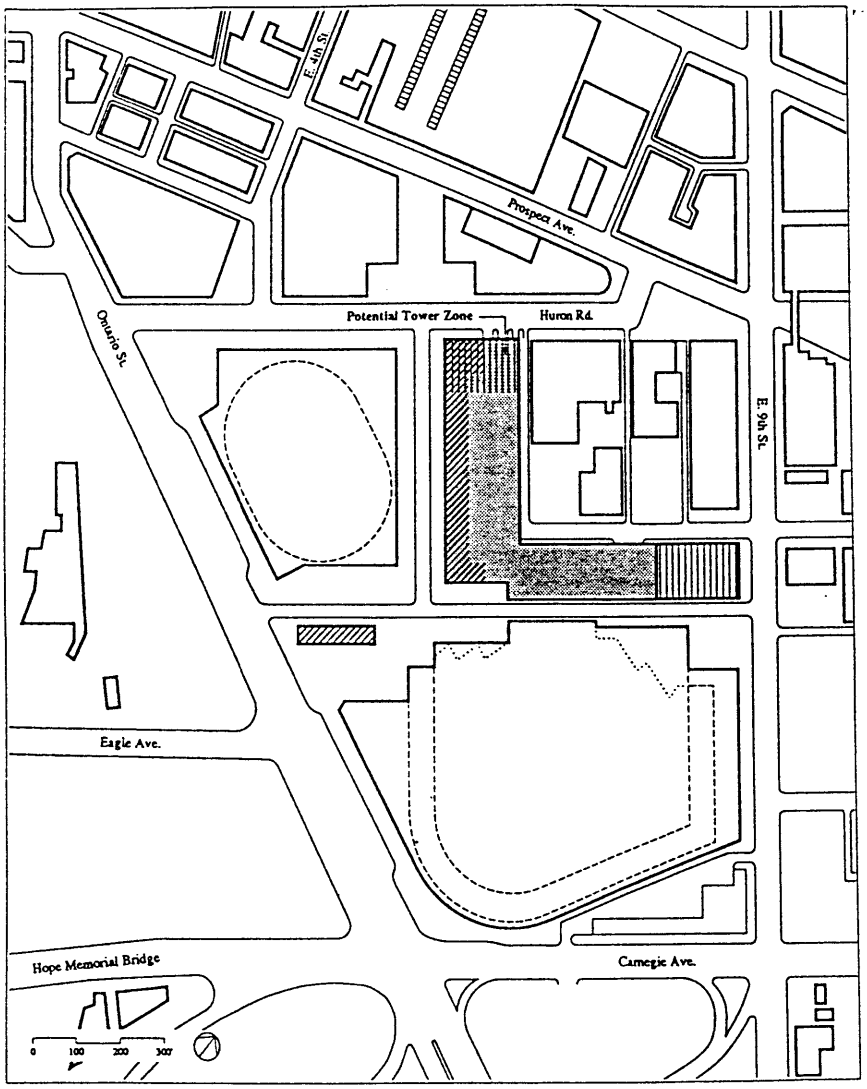

Figure 5.5
Development opportunities on the Gateway site
(Sasaki Associates)

Thus, SkyDome an Oriole Park at Camden Yards, as well as other recently conceived stadium projects provide clues as to how a facility can be effectively sited in cities. Specifically, they suggest that stadia planned for cities should, in contrast to previous efforts, be planned not in isolation but in consideration of existing elements of the city. In particular, the examples cited here suggest that, in contrast to widely held dispositions for suburban locations, the most effective sites for stadium may be in or adjacent to the CBD. Yet, the key to their central location is that -unlike many earlier stadium efforts- they are

not islands in an urban sea but are instead functionally and integrally tied in with facilities already existing downtown. Recent stadium projects, including SkyDome and Camden Yards show that existing transportation facilities and land uses, and the potential of guiding future downtown development are all important virtues of downtown stadium sites.

CHAPTER 6: Affecting a Sense of Place

In addition to the problems already addressed, there is a less quantifiable problem associated with planning the urban stadium. The ability of a sports facility to influence our perceptions of place is clearly not an issue that guided modern and post-war stadium projects, but Oriole Park and Camden Yards, in addition to others, provide cues as to how a sports facility can enhance the character of their respective host neighborhoods. Specifically, both (in addition to other projects) suggest that affecting a sense of place involves an appropriate definition of the stadium's uses, and also requires that consideration be given to the planning of the surrounding area. The purpose of this chapter is in examination of these issues, to suggest how a stadium can positively affect the character of the area it inhabits.

The Mixed Use Stadium

The crucial element in using a stadium to create an interesting place is to reconsider its functions. Perhaps the most important lesson as to how stadia in this regard might positively affect a sense of place is to reflect upon the failures of recent urban stadium efforts. It is clear, however, that the failure of the stadia was representative of the failed school of thought from which they were planned. Consequently, any subsequent urban stadium efforts need reflect the accepted, emerging school of thought.

Post war stadia were products of philosophy pushing radical functional and physical reconfigurations of urban centers. With the establishment of the automobile and construction of highways upon which to commute, middle and upper income residents fled the confines of the city in search of the half acre American dream. The consequence of this flight was devastating for urban centers. "The shells of... cities were getting to look like black and white newsreels of the Great Depression."[1]

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[1]Frieden, B.J., Sagalyn, L.B. Downtown Inc., How America Rebuilds Cities, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1990, p. 13

Declaring the obsolescence of the urban center's traditional pattern of land uses, urbanists and urban politicians alike resorted to the drastic conclusion that "the task was to renovate entire neighborhoods to provide a completely new land-use pattern." The aims of the establishment were therefore to reinvent the city for those activities and people deemed both necessary and appropriate; "cities were building projects for a narrow band of users more than for the public at large."[2] Projects were designed and programmed to attract this "narrow band" who could afford to visit or live in these renewal projects but who remained wary of the downtown environment and social contingent. To ensure their attractiveness, the charge to architects and planners was therefore to design projects that resulted in minimal interaction between the new and the old; "to avoid any features that might prove attractive to casual visitors."[3] Furthermore, to mix uses, given the precedent set by the decaying downtowns, was taboo; experience had shown, it was argued, that city planning provide a rational separation of obviously incompatible land uses.

Two subsequently prominent features typified the mid-century, urban renewal-era stadium: They were planned to serve a single function, and emphasized their separation from the surrounding city. Concrete donuts impressed into these urban centers epitomize the ideals of urban renewal planners. Their functions are in fact no different than any project from the urban renewal era: Bring people in from the suburbs by guaranteeing desired activities sheltered from the prevailing urban environment. Suburbanites traveling to St. Louis' Busch Stadium could be assured that since the facility was nothing more than a sporting venue, that they need not worry about encountering anyone except thousands of other sports enthusiasts. And once inside the facility, they would be sealed off from the unpleasant, disturbing city around them; there would be no cues piercing the edifice to suggest that they were anywhere besides a baseball of football game.

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[2]Frieden & Sagalyn; p. 39
[3]Frieden & Sagalyn; p. 39

It is this one-dimensional quality of urban renewal projects, including stadium projects, that would contribute to the movement's demise. There was little to offer the average person beyond possibly a cubicle in an anonymous tower from which to escape for home at 5pm, or a show or game from which to drive directly to and from with no diversions. The organization of activities was too rational, too efficient. Recounted one critic: "Pittsburgh residents", who despite having been bestowed their own downtown donut, "do not dawdle downtown, or come back down there after work and on weekends... there is little to attract or hold people there."[4] Modern urban stadia continue to exist as the classic example. "With the exception of the time there are events in them, they are black holes."[5]

These cold lifeless environments spirited a reconsideration of the virtues of the urban environment and consequently, of the urban stadium. In attempting to rectify all the ills of the city, "it is so easy to fall into a trap of contemplating a city's uses one at a time, by categories."[6] To do so, argues Jane Jacobs among other theorists in reaction to modern planning, is to ignore and hinder the diversity that is natural to big cities. Rather, she contends, the fundamental unit of the city must be a mixture of uses -that no part of the city be defined by one use.

Thus, it is this emergent notion of the urban order of activity to which future urban stadium projects must prescribe -if they are to disassociate themselves from the urban renewal conceptions with which (to this day) they are commonly associated. And both Oriole Park and SkyDome give clues as to how this is achieved. In stark contrast the autonomy and single purpose nature deliberately programmed into modern urban stadia, both SkyDome and Camden Yards seek to breach the formal boundary between city and project -to positively affect the sense of place by defining themselves as more than sports facilities.

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[4]Frieden & Sagalyn; p. 59

[5]Smith, Janet-Marie, Vice President New Stadium Planning and Development, The Baltimore Orioles, Inc., conversation, Jan. 23, 1992

[6]Jacobs, Jane: The Death and Life of great American Cities, Vintage Books, New York, 1961, p. 143

Those who planned Camden Yards recognized that the notion of the urban stadium stretches far beyond the aesthetic for which the stadium is lauded, to include to functional concerns stressed by Jacobs and others. Janet Marie Smith contends that a great deal of effort was put into avoiding not only the aesthetic monotony, but also the functional monotony planned into modern and post-war stadia. Camden Yards' planners feel they have successfully countered the "black hole" stigma of urban sports facilities by integrating it into a larger program of activities that simply replicate the mix found throughout the city; the shops, restaurants and bars on the ground floor of Camden Warehouse, fully accessible to (and hoping to feed off of) the general urban population; and the hundreds of thousands of square feet of office space on the upper floors, providing streams of traffic to and from the site at the beginning and end of the work day and at lunch hour. In stark contrast then to the declared obsolescence of traditional urban land use patterns that defined the functions of contemporary stadia, Camden Yards uses this pattern as a model of what constitutes an interesting, genuinely urban place.

Similarly, SkyDome follows former Toronto City Planning Commissioner Stephen McLaughlin's vision that it must prove its worthiness to more than sports enthusiasts. Relative to the domes that preceded it, SkyDome is not self-serving, rather its range of functions -its shops, recreation facilities, dining establishments, and conference centers- is defined in anticipation of urban fabric of employment and residential functions that will ultimately surround it.

Thus, its primary function differs with that of Oriole Park (multi-use versus baseball-only facility), but SkyDome conforms to the ideal put forth by the Baltimore ballpark, and thus challenges the assumption that an "urban stadium" is defined by the aesthetic and primary purpose. Functionally, both are contextual; Oriole Park relating to the context of the old, existing city, SkyDome relating to the city of tomorrow. This suggests that the definition of the "urban stadium" is largely based on whether the facility has anything to offer the people of the city beyond sports or trade shows.

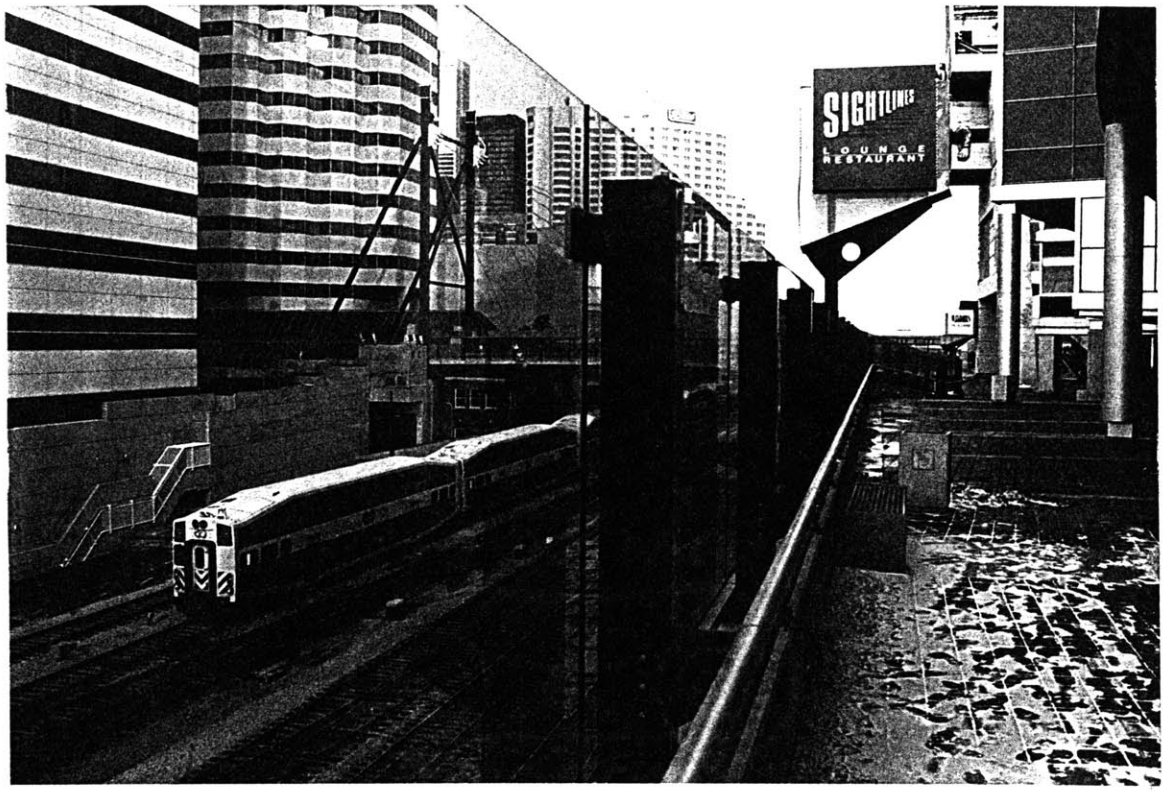

Figure 6.1
Many of SkyDome's activities are on its northern edge, facing a railway corridor
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

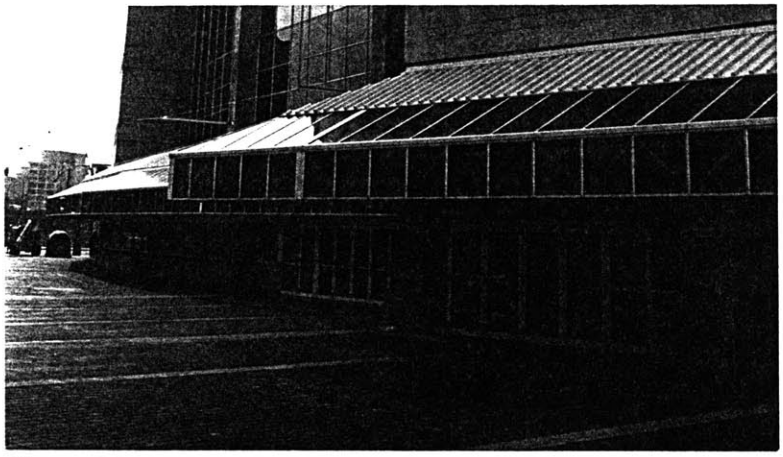

Figure 6.2
There are no land uses facing Bremner Boulevard, along SkyDome's southern edge
(Terry Fraser-Reid)

While SkyDome and Oriole Park provide lessons as to how functionally blending a stadium project into a city can reinforce its attractiveness and sense of belonging, equally as much can be learned from understanding the shortfalls of both projects. Although SkyDome, for example, houses a plethora of activities that will cater to the future residents and businesses of the Railway Lands, it is the orientation and location of these uses that is problematic. For it is insufficient to merely include these activities -they must be located conspicuously, in places where they will attract passers-by and will contribute to the vitality of the area. SkyDome has only one elevation (the north) that does not front a public circulation route. Yet it is here that all of SkyDome's "publicly accessible" activities -the hotel, restaurants and bars- have been located (Figure 6.1), squeezed between the stadium and a rail corridor while the stadium's frontage along the Esplanade -the Railway Lands' Main Street- remains totally unanimated (save a McDonald's; Figure 6.2).

Long after the Railway Lands are built out, there will be no randomness associated with these backside uses, as there would be no reason to venture there unless one already knew their destination. Furthermore, the decision not to provide these uses along the Esplanade will detract from the randomness and vibrancy of the street's life, hindering -rather than improving- the character of the urban setting. Indeed, the opportunity to positively affect the environment by giving SkyDome a life beyond its primary purpose has thus not been optimized.

Such shortcomings lead one to question whether the attempt to functionally integrate SkyDome into the city fabric was an appropriate or necessary means of attempting to enhance the quality of the place it inhabits. Such large scale projects as European gallerias and North American railway stations (such as New York's Grand Central) prove that a large scale facility can enhance a sense of place by expressing (rather than attempting to conceal) monumentality and distinctive functional characteristics. SkyDome does attempt to captalize on its physical and functional status

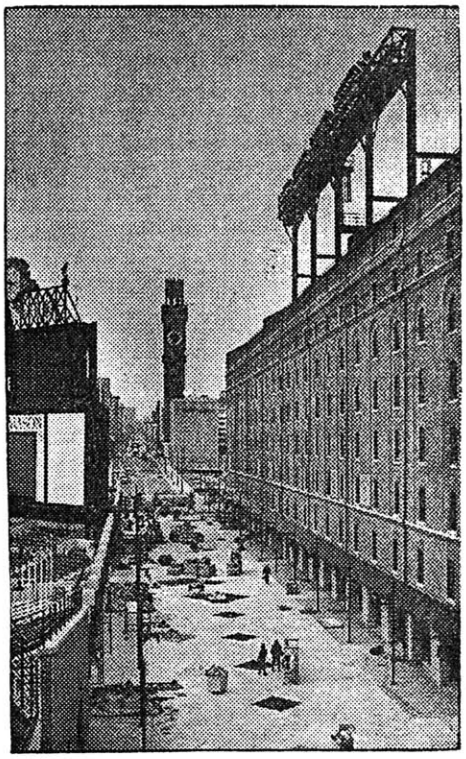

Figure 6.3
Eutaw Street pedestrian corridor
(Washington Post)

by providing massive (if not appealing) sculptures protruding out of its northern corners, treminating the Peter and John Street views; but these seem only to be comprimise between desired modesty and true grandeur. Design critic A.J. Diamond feels a complete approach was warranted in SkyDome's case. "The stadium being monumental in size and character, requires an appropriately large urban setting, not a situation in which its prominence in the city is camouflaged."[7] Yet to plan a stadium in such a way comes dangerously close to repeating the imposing white elephant quality of its predecessors. Diamond feels that a successful approach would have been to replicate the effective qualities of the city's other civic monuments, including the old and new city halls, and

[7]Diamond, A.J. "Domed Stadium, Toronto" Canadian Architect, May, 1989, p.32

Queen's Park: each of these (and only these) places sit astride the street grid, and have public space as a forecourt apron.

Neither were Camden Yards' planners totally successful functionally integrating the ballpark site into the city. Although publicly-accessibility to uses along the maintained Eutaw Street corridor (between the ballpark and warehouse; Figure 6.3) is an interesting means by which to weave these activities into the surrounding urban mix, it is unfortunate that this represents the extent of the ballpark's offerings. Baltimore City planners have expressed regret that the ballpark does not take advantage of its Camden Street frontage by providing uses there for the general public.[8] In conjunction with the establishments opening up along the opposite side of the Camden/Russell Streets public square, such uses would have given an interesting character and sense of activity to the space both during and outside of event times. As a Golden Age model, Fenway Park exemplifies the positive affect that a park's mixed usage can have on a place. Because of the street-oriented office and commercial establishments, the site contributes to the activity of the area, while one can walk down Brookline Avenue and not sense a distinction between the block upon which the ballpark sits and any other sections of the street. By not providing these uses, Oriole Park's planners have thus fallen short in their attempts to similarly establish the park as a fully active part of the city.[9] Thus, like SkyDome, Oriole Park reminds us (in its shortcomings) that the urbanity of sports facilities goes beyond the aesthetic.

Creating Sports Districts

Another approach available to planners in their efforts to find an effective relationship between sports facility and its host area is to define that area as a sports district -an effect that can be achieved by combining the facility with other sports facilities.

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[8]Bose, Shubroto, Director of Architecture and Urban Design, The Baltimore Development Corporation, conversation, Jan. 24, 1992

[9]Sasaki Associates, Inc.: The Gateway Project: Urban Design Guidelines, May 9, 1991, p. 8

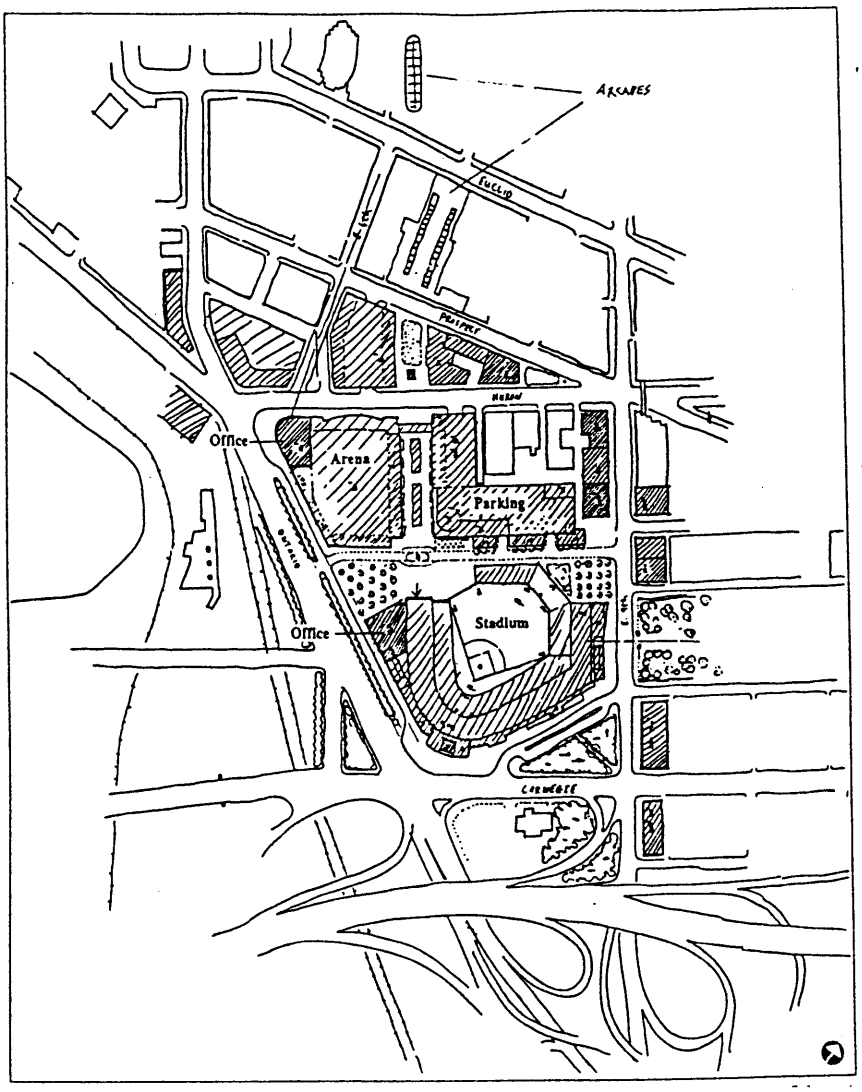

Figure 6.4
Gateway's pedestrian routes link with Cleveland's historical arcades
(Sasaki Associates)

The ability of any single-purpose sports facility to define a sense of place is difficult, as baseball is played (at the most) 81 days a year, basketball and hockey 40 each, and football only eight times annually. Building these facilities in close proximity is thus a means of achieving a critical mass. In addition to the Camden Yards example, where the Maryland Stadium Authority hopes a football domed stadium will soon join Oriole Park, several other new stadia compliment -or will be complimented by- other sports facilities. The Georgia Dome, for example, is adjacent to the Omni basketball and

hockey arena, thus serving to characterize downtown's southern edge as the city's sports region. A more comprehensive initiative is the Cleveland Gateway project, where the mentioned new-old ballpark will be built in conjunction with a new 20,000 seat basketball arena.

While combining sports facilities may be a means of defining an area's character, so too does the approach increase the importance of maintaining a diverse set of uses for the area -of avoiding the anti-urban, megastructure problems of self-centeredness and singular purpose. Gateway and Camden Yards seem to share a common approach in dealing with this danger, as both projects will weave urban activities deep through their respective sites. As mentioned earlier, The Maryland Stadium Authority may develop sites between the ballpark and the football stadium site. Similarly, Gateway's planners have maintained a cross axis on the site- the paths linked to the surrounding street system (Figure 6.4). Lining these routes will be pedestrian oriented commercial uses, as well as upper-story hotels and offices that will bring the public onto the site outside of event times.

The Character of the Surroundings

Like any activity or structure in the city, the ability of a sports facility to relate to -and to enhance the sense of- the area it inhabits is not totally self-determined, but is also a function of the characteristics of these surroundings, both functional and physical.

Complimentary Form of the Surroundings

While the land use relationships between stadium and neighborhood are significant in determining the affect of the stadium on the area's character, equally important is the issue of how the area's built form relates to the sports facility.

With the locating of SkyDome in the Railway Lands, Toronto's city planners were presented with a unique opportunity to enhance the dialogue between the stadium and

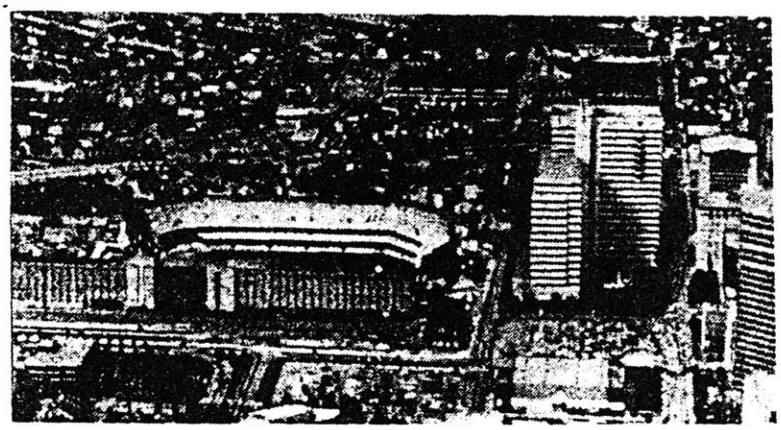

Figure 6.5
The proposed 660,000 SF Health Care Finance Administration building
(RTKL Associates)

surroundings by considering the latter in respect of the former. Built into a barren attractive development site, SkyDome has been allowed to dictate the ultimate physical character of the Railway Lands. The City's planners have respectfully reorganized the massing to properly frame the important civic structure, but also to put the stadium's mass in a dense, urban context (thereby minimizing its visual impact) while maintaining the city's familiar nodal development pattern.

Although Camden Yards is situated in a markedly different urban context -established urban forms already in place around the stadium- so too were there opportunities to plan the city's form in response to the stadium. In fact, the four city-owned, vacant properties between the ballpark and the CBD, and the development rights above the Camden rail platform provide a unique situation: an undeveloped immediate context amidst a dense city fabric. However, concepts released for these lots since the construction of Oriole Park suggest that -as with their neighborhood redevelopment plans- the City is doing little in terms of changing their intentions for the sites. The Health Care Finance Administration building proposed for the site north of the ballpark, (Figure 6.5) .has not been subjected to any new zoning regulations requiring street-side commercial provisions that might help animate the streets adjacent to the ballpark; in conjunction with the mentioned lack of street-side provision on the ballpark site, Camden

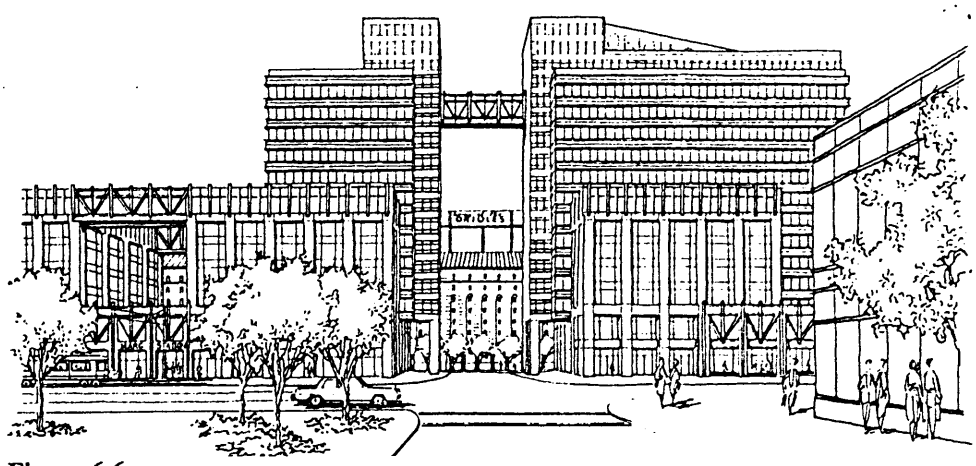

Figure 6.6
The view of Camden Yards from the Inner Harbor following air rights construction over the rail platforms.
(Ayers/Saint/Gross, Inc.)

Street will be less interesting a place -both during and outside of game times- than it might have been. Furthermore, allowable densities for Medical Market facility likely to be constructed over the rail terminal air-rights will almost totally obstruct the views of the ballpark and warehouse from adjacent downtown streets (Figure 6.6). Indeed, the fact that development guidelines for these developable properties have gone unchanged leaves open the dangerous opportunity, as one planner suggested, for the city to "turn its back" on its exciting new gem.[10]

There is of course an alternative evaluation of this situation -relating it to the planning and design principles that guided the Oriole Park project. Traditional-style ballpark enthusiasts might argue that the City's maintenance of area design guidelines merely speaks to the contextual sensitivity of the ballpark. Like any building, it does not dictate the growth of the city around it; rather, the ballpark will be increasingly at home as the city continues to evolve unaffected. This view would also point out then, in contrast, that the City of Toronto's need to reform the massing schemes subsequent to SkyDome's construction merely speaks to its insensitivity.

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[10]Huhn, Barry, Associate, RTKL Associates, conversation, Jan. 22, 1992

Public Space Links

Providing quality public space in the areas around sports facilities (in the form of both streets and open spaces) is another means by which urban stadia can forge a link with the areas they inhabit.

As the quality of the pedestrian experience is a substantial contributor to one's perception of place, the tremendous pedestrian traffic generated by urban sports facilities ought to therefore force a consideration, in the planning stages, of the experience of approaching the facility. Again though, in examining this concept as a component of urban stadium planning, one finds no correlation with aesthetic differences between projects. Indeed, the City of Toronto's "rationalization" of the Railway Lands land use plan was based in part on the premise that the experience of going to SkyDome ought not be limited to its footprint. Ultimately, recollections of a visit to SkyDome should include the walk to the stadium along streets alive with shops, restaurants, and bars to which one might wander. To the contrary however in Baltimore, the experience of the walk to the ballpark for many will be limited to a two hundred yard trip past the warehouse to the rail platforms. And it seems, based on the City's laissez-faire planing efforts, little has been done thus far to relate stadium to context with regards to enriching the off-site walking experience northward to the subway stations, or eastward to the Inner Harbor.

A consideration of the pedestrian experience also factored into the planning of Cleveland's Gateway project. The north/south on-site street is aligned to connect at the site's northern boundary with the city's historic downtown arcades (see Figure 6.4). This arrangement is particularly effective as it will serve to separate the crowds from the vehicular traffic in the area, and like the Toronto and Baltimore examples, will give those patrons walking to or from downtown parking or transit facilities an interesting, decidedly urban experience to associate with their trip to the sports complex.

Public open space, when planned as part of a stadium project, is also effective in enhancing the character of the area. In addition to enhancing the civic nature of the facility, open spaces can be designed to perceptually link the ballpark to the surrounding areas by responding to views, connections, and sight lines[11] -a responsiveness that helps define the stadium's association with its surroundings. The southwest entry to Camden Yards for example has been configured to accommodate significant flow of pedestrians, but also presents the "first impression" of the ballpark and of the city from King Boulevard and from Russell Street approaching directly on axis.[12]

The projects also show that open space around a stadium can also provide a functional tie between stadium and city that helps define its belonging, and adds to the character and quality of the surrounding area. The City of Toronto for example pushed Rod Robbie and his architects to plan public plazas for the building edges believing that, upon full development of the Lands, they will result in maximized public use and interest in the facility outside of event times. Similarly, the public square that was designed for the intersection of Russell and Camden Streets on the northwestern corner of Oriole Park would provide an attractive, useful space for the city's residents, but one that is in part framed by -and therefore clearly associated with- the ballpark.*

Like the issue of site selection, the scope of stadium urban planning has evolved as a function of our changing perceptions of cities and of city planning. Stadium projects need be considered in terms of how the facility itself will interact with surroundings, and thus how it might positively influence the character of the neighborhood. As both projects show in their successes and shortcomings, this involves not only consideration of the on-site features, but demands respect of the dialogue involved: that the surroundings' form

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[11]Landscape Architecture: "1991 Awards: The Gateway Project", Landscape Architecture, Nov. 1991, p. 66

[12]RTKL Associates, Inc., Master Plan Progress Report: Camden Yards Sports Complex Development Plan for the Maryland Stadium Authority, Nov. 8, 1988, p.4.19

*At the time of this writing the City had not approved consultants' recommendations to construct the public space.

and function, and how they relate to the facility, are integral in determining how a stadium can enhance our perceptions of the place.

CHAPTER 7: Capturing Economic Benefits

A point of contention is currently growing between stadium project proponents and opponents around the economic benefits that such projects may provide for host cities and states. Government and sports facility officials including those, as we have read, in Baltimore and Toronto have defended sports facilities projects by suggesting that they and their tenants provide economic returns far greater than any costs that may be incurred by the public.

However, given the established tradition of extensive public funding, the number of stadium projects recently completed and currently under consideration, and their escalating costs of construction, skeptics have begun to examine and critique such claims. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the Toronto and Baltimore projects fair against these criticisms, and to suggest how the projects have -or have not- been planned and designed maximize their potential returns.

Costs vs. Benefits

Perhaps the central issue in examining the economic impacts of stadia is to understand their costs to the public relative to their returns. There are several areas of concern here: the questionable versus actual benefits of stadia, their true costs of their construction, and the costs of continued operation. Examination of these issues has lead researchers to the conclusion that "no reasonable expectation of financial benefit could possibly explain why city official are ready to spend whatever it takes to bring in sports teams."[1]

[1]Frieden, Bernard J.; Sagalyn, Lynne, B.: Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, p. 250

Questionable Benefits

Perhaps the most frequently heard argument in support of stadium projects is that they will directly and indirect result in substantial economic activity. "In particular," economist Robert Baade points out, "stadium proponents assert that a city's economy will benefit substantially if a professional sports franchise can be secured [or retained] as a tenant."[2] A substantial component of almost all projections, including the two cases studied here, is the stadium's resultant "output", or the economic activity "created by public expenditures."[3]

However, such claims assume spending would not have occurred in the absence of a stadium's construction. Robert Baade's findings lead him to draw an alternative argument for substitution effect: that the sports spending such as that promoted by SkyDome and Oriole Park advocates, simply diverts dollars from other activities in other areas. He cites as evidence a regression analysis (in which the stadium variable presumably captures the economic multiplier triggered by professional sports) which demonstrated that stadium renovation or construction, or the adoption of a pro baseball or football team had an insignificant impact on five of nine cities' incomes, and was actually followed by a reduction in cities' respective shares of regional income in seven of the nine cases.[4] Thus, for example, SkyDome Vice President David Garrick's contention that the stadium has led to improved business for area bars and restaurants fails to respect the plausibility that patrons would most likely be spending their money elsewhere in the city had the stadium never been built. Baade findings lead him to warn that "the construction or renovation of a stadium... might well have a positive effect on the economy in the stadium's immediate neighborhood. But at what cost to the city as a whole?"[5]

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[2]Baade, Robert: "Is there Economic Rationale for Subsidizing Sports Stadiums?" Heartland Policy Study, No. 13, Feb. 23, 1987, p. 2

[3]Peat Marwick, Mitchell, & Co.: Report on the Economic and Tax Impacts of the Camden Yards Stadium Development, Mar. 24, 1987, p.8

[4]Baade, Feb. 23, 1987, p. 16

[5]Donnelly, Harrison: "High Stakes of Sports Economics", Editorial Research Reports, Apr. 8, 1988, p. 180

In fact, as neither Oriole Park or SkyDome introduces a sports franchise to their respective cities but simply relocates them, much of the recorded economic impacts of either new stadium project might be offset to an extent by the losses associated with relocation. John Connally, Development Advisor the Mayor of Boston, warns of an "economic infrastructure" of an area crumbling when a team is moved to a different location -even within the city limits.[6] It seems clear that SkyDome advocates have overlooked this fact. SkyDome impact figures promoted by Garrick and others[7] for example, fail to address the adverse economic impact resulting form the baseball team's move out of Exhibition Stadium.

Similarly, the Maryland Stadium Authority findings, such as the $1.1 billion net present value of anticipated economic benefits, refer to net benefits of the two proposed new stadia (that is, the new two stadium complex less the impact of the abandonment of Memorial Stadium)[8]. But they do not describe what would be the net economic impact of only the new baseball stadium. This is a critical (and perhaps telling) omission, as it is entirely plausible (consequent to a failed effort to acquire a football franchise) that the second stadium will never be built.

Skeptics have also criticized the true benefits of stadia with regards to the employment opportunities they bring to a city. Figures calculated in the projection of Oriole Park's benefits, for example, show that 950 full-time equivalent jobs will result from Camden Yard's construction.[9] Similarly, SkyDome officials estimate that, considering multipliers, their project will have created 3,000 full and part time jobs.[10] The counter argument here is to consider the types of jobs generated by stadium projects: seasonal, low paying opportunities, such as food and beverage vending, security

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[6]Connally, John, Development Advisor to the Mayor of Boston, Conversation, Nov. 19. 1991

[7]Pickard, J.L.; Araujo, I.C: "Financing Toronto's SkyDome: A Unique Partnership of Public and Private Funding", Government Finanace Review, Dec. 1989, P.9

[8]Peat Marwick, Mitchell, & Co., Mar. 24, 1987, p.21

[9]Peat Marwick, Mitchell, & Co., Mar. 24, 1987, p. 8

[10]Garrick, p.2

personnel, and retail sales positions. There is a danger to the respective cities, according to economists, that"[a]n area development strategy which concentrates on these types of jobs could lead to a situation where the city gains a comparative advantage in unskilled and seasonal labor."[11]

Clear Benefits

Yet there are some economic benefits associated with stadium construction that are less debatable. Both Toronto's and Baltimore's baseball teams attract a great number of fans from outside of their respective cities, and the economic impact of these visitors are not insignificant. In Baltimore, for example, the 18.5% of baseball fans and anticipated 22% of football fans that come to Camden Yards from out of town will spend $7.7 million annually in Baltimore.[12]

The economic benefits of a stadium may be more appreciable for cities relative to suburbs. While Robert Baade and other economists warn of the dangers of promoting low-skill, seasonal jobs, the fact is that many cities are in need of such employment opportunities. Although these positions might not be appreciated by middle income suburbanites, they would seemingly provide good second job opportunities for lower skilled urban adults and for urban youths during the summer and on weekends. Conversely, siting a stadium in the suburbs makes these employment opportunities less accessible to the people for whom they might be most beneficial.

The decision to locate stadia in either suburbs or in cities also makes a difference with regards to a cities' incomes. Depending on the specifics of financial arrangement behind the stadium project, a stadium may provide a city with substantial tax revenues -upon which cities are very much in need relative to suburbs. Oriole Park, for example, was projected to bring in $2 million in non-recurring local tax revenues (associated with

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[11]Baade, Robert; Dye, Richard: "The Impact of Stadiums and Professional Sports on Metropolitan Area Development", Growth and Change, Spring, 1990, p. 7

[12]Donnelly, p. 180

the ballpark's construction) and over $400,000 in local tax revenues annually.[13] SkyDome's contribution has been even more substantial: $13.6 of the $38.8 million in taxes paid annually by SkyDome go to Metro and City coffers.[14]

Many of the benefits of stadium construction are, however, not so visible. The fact is that, irrespective of whether they truly believe a stadium will bring economic returns, municipalities carry out stadium projects in pursuit of less tangible rewards. In particular, there is a perceived city-image associated with professional sports franchises that has led to the construction of many stadia over the past two decades, both in host cities and in possible relocation points. To be without a baseball team, it is believed, is to be a second rate city. "I think any great city in this country has to have a major-league baseball team. It's part of the American tradition."[15] The argument has not been limited to baseball. "If you ask people what the great cities in America are, " said the Mayor of Indianapolis in defense of his pursuit of a football team, "I'll bet 99 out of 100 cite a [National Football League] city."[16]

But the "psychic satisfaction" associated with being a "big-league" city impacts more than the public leaders, affecting the opinions of a large portion of the general public. In rationalizing public investment of sports facilities, developer Marc Ganis concludes "I'm not sure that [the view held by some taxpayers] is an entirely correct vision of the situation... [Professional sports] is something which binds communities -I don't think you can put a price tag on that."[17] Indeed, pro teams bring benefits to cities that will not appear on a balance sheet; providing role models for local youths, a basis for city rivalries, and fodder for conversations that bring friends, co-workers, and strangers closer together. And in addition to providing a range of intangible impacts on urban life,

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[13]Peat Marwick, Mitchell, & Co.,, Mar. 24, 1987, p.15

[14]Garrik, David: SkyDome - The Economic Benefits, Stadium Corporation of Ontario, Oct., 1991, p. 6

[15]Sagalyn & Frieden, p. 277

[16]Sagalyn & Frieden, p. 279

[17]Engdahl, p. 16

professional sports speak to a city's character and its pride. "It's like having a first-class symphony, or a zoo, or any of the luxuries people expect from a big town."[18]

The issue is therefore whether this big-league status is worth the expenditure of public funds for new stadia. Politicians certainly think so. At a point in the 1970's where he was forced to lay off city workers and reduce services, Detroit's Mayor Coleman Young was able to put together a $5 million grant and a $25 million revenue bond for renovations to Tiger Stadium that assured the signing of a long-term lease by the baseball club. Coleman insisted that to lose the Tigers would have been "the death knell for the city"[19], suggesting that he and so many other stadium-backing politicians were merely protecting the psychological interests of the city. Indeed, many politicians fear that "it is almost worse for a city's image to lose a major league team than to have never had one at all"[20] and that the image must be protected.

More likely, officials back stadium projects because it makes political sense to do so. The popularity of teams is such, according to the some, that to lose a franchise during one's administration would be political suicide. Furthermore, "the politicians are usually not around to take the blame when the bills come due."[21] But neither is submitting to team pressures a uniformly popular move. Since 1986, voters in San Francisco and Cleveland among other cities have rejected bond issues when placed on referendums; suggesting that while the image associated with professional sports and stadia is valued by communities, the price people are willing to pay is not always unlimited.

Hidden Costs

Another aspect of assessing the net cost of stadia for municipalities is to understand the true economic costs at the outset. The common form of funding has been public outlays

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[18]Knack, Ruth, "Stadiums: The Right Game Plan?" Planning, October, 1986, p.11
[19]Sagalyn & Frieden, p. 277
[20]Sagalyn & Frieden, p. 277
[21]Barnes, p. 26

of funds, but as the era of the publicly funded stadium matures, the form of financial responsibility has taken many shapes. Marc Ganis, a leader in private-sector involvement in stadium projects, concedes that while variations have evolved from the simple cutting of a check, "in most projects you need some forms of public-sector assistance."[22] Miami's Joe Robbie Stadium, touted as a model for future private-sector initiatives, was in fact built on land donated by the county. Similarly, the minimal direct, public sector financing of both SkyDome and Camden does not fully represent the cost of the project borne by the respective municipalities; and suggest that cities must be careful to minimize their exposure beyond simple cash outlays.

In Toronto, the public expense as initially estimated was minimal. In an era of public funding of stadium projects, the initiative of Trevor Eyton and the private sector consortium was almost revolutionary; the private sector outlay of $60 million being far less than that of other municipalities in recent past. Indeed, in defense of SkyDome's price, architect Rod Robbie points out that the municipalities, according to initial estimates, would generate a net *gain* on the project; their $60 million in return for over $100 million dollars worth of infrastructure.

Yet, omitted from all of the favorable analyses of the deal at the time of consummation was recognition of the high risk borne by the public: in return for the reduced cash outlay, the Provincial government would pay for construction cost overruns, officially projected as $23 million dollars at groundbreaking. But according to SkyDome's David Garrick, no one truly believed the project would cost under $300 million[23] -a difference of $67 million over the original estimate likely to be targeted for the absorption. More importantly, the guarantee allowed the private sector interest to elaborate on the project with the reassurance that the public would ultimately be held financially responsible. While Garrick insists the late program additions were an attempt

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[22]Engdahl, Lora: "Purusing Private Development: The Ganis Game Plan", Facility Manager, Summer, 1985, p. 11
[23]Garrick, conversation, Jan. 28, 1992

to assure long-term increases in the stadium's operating revenues,[24] Stephen McLaughlin's represents a more widely held opinion. "The province basically gave them a blank check, so they got carried away with [the program]."[25] The cost of the public's guarantee would not be fully understood until the project was completed -at over $300 million over budget. Thus the trade of low initial outlay in return for the guarantee ended up being a bad deal for the public: They paid at least as much as they would have had a stadium project been totally publicly financed and controlled, but in this deal had no say about the spending of tax dollars, hold only 51% equity in the facility, and will likely sell this interest in an effort to reduce their debt.

The Baltimore case is another example of the fact that public interest can take several forms beyond the simple cutting of a check , and that such costs should not be discounted. Indeed the use of revenue bonds, the interest of which will be paid primarily by proceeds from a state lottery, seems relatively benign. As the Stadium Authority's Ed Cline points out, residents who do not wish to subsidize the stadium have the option not to do so, since their tax dollars were not being relied upon. However, it is the opportunity cost with which taxpayers will be burdened, as the lottery proceeds ($92.2 million at the time of this writing)[26] are not going to the state general treasury, where most lottery revenues go. As State Senator Howard A. Denis (R-Montgomery), a staunch opponent of the stadium project warns, the diversion of lottery revenues to the bonds "leaves a hole that has to be filled from some other source-the taxpayer."[27]

The use of revenue bonds by the Maryland Stadium Authority reflects a growing trend in public finance away from the school of thought that "taxing and spending decisions ought to be clear and open"[28] towards a practice of off-budget financing, where long-term projects avoid competition with other municipal demands for limited tax

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[24]Garrick, conversation, Jan. 28, 1992

[25]McLaughlin, conversation, Jan. 27, 1992

[26]Valentine, Paul: "Residents Worry Oriole Park Won't be Friendly Neighbor", Washington Post, March 30, 1992, p. C1

[27]Valentine, p. .C8

[28]Frieden & Sagalyn : p. 250

dollars by relying on funding sources (tax increments, parking revenues) that do not have to receive voter approval. Such tactics are defended based on the delayed payoffs usually associated with the projects; they are means of giving cities "a chance to build complex projects for the sake of future benefits."[29] To the extent that actual economic benefits will ultimately result from Camden Yards, this may represent a justifiable procedure, but as suggested earlier, many of the reported long-term benefits of preceding stadia are dubious. On the other hand, it is clear that off-budget financing was sought because "[it] escape the hard looks and cold calculations reserved for cash outlays"[30] but, as the depletion of lottery revenues proves, still comes at a cost to taxpayers.

The net benefits of stadium projects are also compromised, as the Baltimore case suggests, by costs likely to be borne by taxpayers that are not accounted for in the final tabulations. The final construction cost for Oriole Park has been officially totaled as $106.5 million,[31] $1.1 million over the pre-construction estimate.[32] What is, however, not accounted for in the total are $99 million in property acquisition and relocation costs, and $9.6 million in infrastructure paid directly by the city -both of which represent hidden costs to taxpayers, according to stadium opponents.[33] Baltimore city planner Evans Paull adds to this the write-down by the City of properties to which businesses relocated, in supplement of insufficient Stadium Authority relocation allowances.[34] There is no doubt in the city administration's opinion that, merely in terms of hidden costs, "[Baltimore] has heavily invested in the new stadium."[35]

Costly Operations

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[29]Frieden & Sagalyn, p. 250
[30]Frieden & Sagalyn, p. 249
[31]Valentine, p. C8
[32]Baltimore Orioles, Inc. New Downtown BallPark to Open in '92, Baltimore Orioles, Inc., p.1
[33]Valentine, p. C8
[34]Paull, conversation, Jan. 24, 1992
[35]Valentine, p. C8

In addition to hidden costs, the continued operation of stadia have proven to be a continued financial burden to taxpayers. Here, economists have reserved special criticism for dome facilities: that, contrary to their advocates assertions of flexible programming and year-round availability, dome projects are not only a financial burden because of their tremendous construction costs, but few -if truly any- can operate annually at a profit. The Houston Astrodome, modestly priced by today's standards, must be booked 150 days out of the year in order not to operate at an annual deficit,[36] while the Superdome in New Orleans has been subsidized by tax payers -as much as $12 million- every year since opening.[37]

This scenario, according to some, is the result of a waning novelty of domes that has reduced their allurement for both patrons and events, and of an inability of facilities to secure enough 'dates' to operate profitably given the growing number of competing venues.[38] A perverse example of this dilemma is the St. Petersburg, Florida Sun Coast Dome, built in 1988 to attract a major-league baseball club, but four years later is still without a major tenant.

Toronto's SkyDome does not present a solution to this quandary, but rather suggests a reiteration of the dilemma at the next level. SkyDome is merely to the 1990's what the Astrodome was to the 1960's: a sports venue designed to reap profits by offering conditions that others cannot. Indeed, as is asserted in Chapter 3, the city's push for a fixed roof facility gradually disappeared as their novelty wore. And investors demanded that any project they funded have a retractable roof in order that it be "like no other in the world."[39]

As suspected, and as the previously mentioned "dome factor" implies, SkyDome is operating at an annual profit largely because of its (and not events') allurement. The

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[36]Baade, Feb. 23, 1987, p. 8

[37]Barnes, John A.: "Home Sweet Dome", The Washington Monthly, Feb. 1988, p. 25

[38]Lancaster, Michael: "Stadium Projects Proliferating Amidst Debate Over Benefits to Cities", Wall Street Journal, Mar.20, 1987, p.37

[39]Filey, Mike, Like No Other in the World, The Story of Toronto's SkyDome Sun Controlled Ventures Inc., Toronto, 1989, p. 7

question of course is the extent to which this effect will last, given the example set by domes in the previous iteration of stadia concepts. Several cities have contemplated building retractable roof stadia Rod Robbie himself has had discussions with officials in several American cities concerning such projects, and has been contracted to design six venues in Japan.[40] SkyDome's novelty, and thus dome factor, and profitability, are therefore in jeopardy of following the path previously set by once-unique fixed-roof facilities.

But neither are such open-air stadia as Oriole Park exempt from burdening taxpayers. Playing on the fears of losing their teams, municipalities have historically negotiated lease arrangements with tenant teams so favorable that, irrespective of facility type, they will fail to see operating revenues. In Baltimore, despite having been built a new facility, the Orioles were able to carry over the lease arrangement from Memorial Stadium[41] whereby the Orioles share any net operating profits with the State in profitable years, but pay no rent if the team does not generate a net operating profit.[42] In other cases, lease arrangements have actually cost municipalities money. The City of Philadelphia was forced to build 23 skyboxes and a new outfield scoreboard for the baseball Phillies, at a cost of nearly $3 million , in order to secure a long-term lease.[43] In a more unique case, the New York Yankees negotiated a lease arrangement whereby they were allowed to deduct maintenance costs from their rent; maintenance costs were subsequently pushed to such a high level that the team wound up billing the City annually for "negative rent."[44]

Planning for Economic Benefits

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[40]Robbie, Roderick, conversation, Jan. 30, 1992

[41]Maryland Stadium Authority; Baltimore Orioles, Inc.: Memorandum of Agreement Between the Maryland Stadium Authority and Baltimore Orioles, Inc., May 2, 1988, p. 5

[42]Baade, Feb. 23, 1987, p. 9

[43]Baade, Feb. 23, 1987, p. 10

[44]Frieden & Sagalyn, p. 278

While economists insist that the economic benefits trumpeted by stadium advocates are dubious, one must respect that fact that cities throughout North America will continue to pursue stadia projects; pursuing both these dubious benefits and the big-league or 'world-class' status[45] that drove the SkyDome and Camden Yards projects, and so many before them. Robert Baade argues that, consequently, if stadia projects are to be undertaken, their economic liabilities demand planning in a fashion whereby their potential economic benefits are maximized.[46] While the two projects studied here reflect the economic liabilities mentioned above, so too do they suggest ways for which this maximization of benefits can be planned.

An oversight of most stadium impact projections is the failure to consider the opportunity cost associated with promoting sports: That doing so "will encourage a development character in a city different than that of the region of which the city is a part."[47] It cannot be assumed in most cases that a city is better served in the long term, according to Baade, by sports and stadium-related economic growth than by that taking shape in the rest of the region. While no such 'opportunity-cost' projections are provided by either Baltimore or Toronto stadium advocates, this warning would suggest that both cities provided the seemingly appropriate economic 'landscapes' in which to build stadia.

The City of Baltimore, for example, had been revitalizing and redefining its downtown as a culture and tourism hub for nearly 15 years prior to the ballpark's construction; downtown had long since distinguished itself from the region economically. In fact, Evan Paull's assertion that the City has been searching to increase its tourism appeal suggests that they sought further differentiation, and that Oriole Park was merely a well-timed opportunity to do so. Similarly, Toronto has long been defined as the tourism

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[45]Lancaster, Hal : "Stadium Projects are Proliferating Amid Debates Over Benefit to Cities", Wall Street Journal, Mar. 20, 1987, p. 37

[46]Baade, Robert, Dye, Richard: "Sports Stadiums and Area Development: A Critical Review", Economic Development Quarterly, V.2, No. 3, Aug., 1988, p. 272

[47]Baade& Dye, Aug., 1988, p. 13

and culture capital of Ontario; SkyDome was proposed in part as a reflection of a direction in which Toronto's image and economy has been developing.

Subsequent to the rationale of building both stadia is the economic sensibility of locating them downtown. Evans Paull, in defending the selection of the Camden Yards site, contends that a suburban alternative would have automatically resulted in less substantial -and more diffuse- economic spin-offs. Given the typical suburban stadium model, "who's going to go out of the 15,000 car parking lot to a neighborhood bar, then walk back to their car?"[48] Irrespective of the parking, suburban locales are less likely to have commercial land uses to attract such patrons. As a consequence, stadium patrons are likely to stop on their ways home at some indeterminable location -if at all.

Baade and others thus contend that the optimization of a sports facility's economic benefits requires that such patrons be 'captured' -that "it is essential to counterbalance this tendency of [stadium patrons] to leave the stadium neighborhood immediately after the game."[49] In response, Oriole Park and SkyDome are located in optimal locations, as the pedestrian nature of their cities' urban fabrics provide varieties of nearby opportunities to spend money before and after visiting the stadia. Furthermore, the site planning of both will serve to maximize the exposure of stadium traffic to the respective areas: SkyDome provides virtually no on-site parking, while Camden Yards' designers relegated parking to the area of the site far removed from commercial activity.

While the urban environment may be most suitable for maximizing economic spin-offs, to simply retro-fit a stadia in an urban location (irrespective of its design and layout) is insufficient. "While stadium 'trickle-down' benefits to the neighborhood represent an important component of the orthodox stadium rationale, it is rarely represented as more than a vague promise."[50] Instead of assuming -or hoping for- these

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[48]Paull, conversation, Jan. 20, 1992
[49]Baade & Dye, Aug., 1988, p. 273
[50]Baade & Dye, Aug., 1988, p. 273

returns, economists have insisted that urban stadium plans be broadened in scope to support ancillary development.

The extensive revisions by Toronto's planners of the Railway Lands plan in accordance with SkyDome's siting is an excellent example of an application of this rationale. For one, the rationalization of planned land uses in the area surrounding the dome is a direct response to the opportunity to capture stadium traffic, as commercial activity will line key pedestrian routes and will thereby help to maximize economic activity. However, the most critical aspect of the Railway Lands' ultimate ability to capture economic spin-offs from SkyDome is the maintenance of plans for mixed uses. Baade has found that "the integration of a variety of commercial activities to include the stadium is generally not sufficient to ensure [economic] success."[51] Commercial uses require far more traffic than is generated in daily and seasonal spurts by stadia. Thus, despite popular criticisms of the idea, residential development, particularly high density development such as that planned for the Railway Lands near SkyDome, is integral to exacting returns for stadia, as it will provide a balanced, more substantial demand for businesses.

While the aggressive planning of the Railway Yards appears to be a model of economists recommendations, there appear to be two ways to interpret the laissez-faire or "incremental"[52] approach taken to the planning of the area surrounding Oriole Park. One interpretation is that contrary to the Toronto case, City planners in Baltimore missed the opportunity to maximize the returns of the stadium by "naively assum[ing] that the ballpark will spontaneously generate development",[53] and as such does not represent a good example of an attempt to capture the economic benefits of a stadium. The passive response of the City's Planning Department is indeed peculiar. Given the successful history of the Baltimore's planning initiatives, one would suspect that the City would have

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[51]Baade & Dye, Aug., 1988, p. 273
[52]Paull, conversation, Jan. 20, 1992
[53]Bess, p. 26

approached the project with a stadium-oriented planning initiative. Furthermore, recognizing that successful stadium planning requires consideration of both site and surroundings, planners who had conducted on-site master planning efforts for the Maryland Stadium Authority expressed frustration at the restriction of their study area to the strict boundaries of the stadium-site -and were indeed surprised at the city's apparent apathy.[54]

A more favorable evaluation of he Baltimore planning response is, however, equally plausible. Baade's and others' warnings that planning a stadium independent of the context would be irresponsible presumes that no plan is in place at the time of the stadium projects conception, or that any existing plans are inappropriate for a stadium. To the contrary in Baltimore, urban redevelopment plans for the adjacent Market Center West and Inner Harbor West areas were implemented long before Oriole Park at Camden Yards evolved, and these plans in fact appear to satisfy the economists' criteria. As Paull suggested, the Market Center West is comprised of land use designations and zoning classifications that permit stadium-related development, particularly along the pedestrian paths of stadium access and egress between the site and subway stops. The plan also calls for a retention of the mix of residential and commercial properties that will allow the latter to benefit form the ballpark's location, but also to have a viability independent of it. Thus, in suggesting that the ballpark will allow this plan to "fill in", city officials may be suggesting that sites for unspectacular, mixed-use redevelopment plans provide an existing environment appropriate for capturing economic gains of stadia.

There are, nonetheless, clear examples of where the City's failure to let the stadium dictate the planning of its surroundings will adversely affect the potential for spin-offs from the stadium. For one of the vacant lot immediately north of the ballpark (Figure 7.1), proposals have been submitted for a 664,000 SF office building, in which no

[54]Huhn, Barry, Associate, RTKL Associates, Inc., Conversation, Jan. 22, 1992

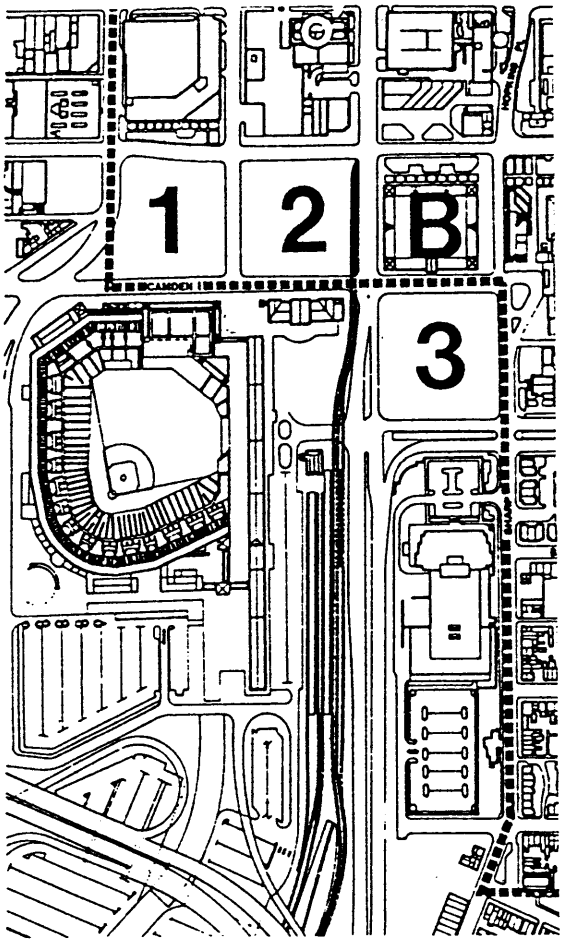

Figure. 7.1
Lots 1, 2, 3 and B are currently vacant; The Convention Center is proposing to expand from Lot A (Baltimore Development Corporation)

street-oriented activity will be provided,[55] while development of the other, adjacent lots is likely to consist of convention center expansion. Indeed, while the vacancy of four blocks of land around Camden Yards seems to provide the perfect scenario for implementing plans and guidelines directed at maximizing ancillary development, there do not appear to be any such initiatives in place.

The location of Oriole Park and SkyDome downtown were also economically wise decisions given the make-up of both teams' patrons. As mentioned, Baade and other economists are skeptical of stadium proponents economic benefit estimates given the

[55]Brose, Shubroto, Director of Architecture and Urban Design, City of Baltimore Development Corporation, conversation, Jan. 24, 1992.

likelihood of a leisure-dollar reallocation factor. Rather, "in standard development models, local growth comes from increased export sales- net inflows of spending from outside the area."[56] Here we see the logic of Evan Paull's "critical mass" concept: As the Orioles and Blue Jays are both regional attractions, drawing more fans regularly from outside the metropolitan area than average, they possess a potential to provide substantial export sales for their respective cities.

Building the facilities downtown, proximal to other attractions and to hotels, would seem to optimize this potential. David Garrick, makes this point in referring to the impact of SkyDome on area hotel business. Thus, were the facilities never constructed, and (certainly in the Baltimore case) the teams subsequently relocated to other cities, the large number of fans who came to games would most likely spend their leisure dollars at home. Were they not built downtown near hotels and other attractions, the net exports would not likely have been maximized.

In assessing the economic impacts of both stadium projects, it is clear that both the Camden Yards and SkyDome are susceptible to the criticisms that have been levied against preceding stadium projects. Both projects project economic benefits that are questionable, and both hold extensive costs not initially or overtly targeted for taxpayers. However, both projects, despite their aesthetic and functional differences, also provide examples of how to help counter economic liabilities through thoughtful considerations of what ought to be a stadium's location and how it ought to be organized.

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[56]Baade & Dye p. 1

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Cities across North America will be facing the question of whether to build a new stadium. In examining the planning of two possible prototypes for future stadia, and based on both their assets and shortcomings, this author has attempted to provide insight into key issues associated with planning professional sports facilities for the urban environment.

Camden Yards has rightfully been widely praised for its reintroduction of traditional ballpark aesthetic. Its eccentric shape and decidedly urban scale are in stark contrast to the megastructure aesthetic applied to predecessors. It successfully reflects both an aesthetic reminiscent of the most beloved era and that of its host environment -reminding us that stadia were initially conceived and designed as urban buildings, and suggests that for no reason should this idea no longer apply. The Camden Yards Sports Complex represents an aesthetic, functional and economically feasible alternative to the forgettable modern and post-war stadium models.

SkyDome provides us with a concept of the multi-purpose, domed stadium that defies our established conceptions. Its technological wizardry and modern appearance are an intriguing peek at what could be the future of sports facilities. As a prototype, it is also informative particularly from an urban planning perspective in that it suggests that notions of applying urban design guidelines to a stadium should not be prejudiced upon the type of facility that is being constructed. Furthermore, despite its shortcomings in achieving the design sought by McLaughlin, SkyDome reminds us that a stadium need not reflect the old city in seeking urbanity, but may be ultimately successful by responding to the city of tomorrow.

In addition, both projects show that a successful "urban" stadium goes beyond aesthetic considerations for which these facilities are so commonly judged, to suggest how sports facilities might *function* as urban uses. Perhaps the singularly most important

preconception dispelled by both of these projects is that stadia are single purpose monoliths, and in this sense inappropriate for the urban setting. SkyDome and Oriole Park suggest that this singularity need not be carried over from the antiquated era of planning from which it was born. Both respect their settings by incorporating decidedly urban mix of activities, and in how these activities were allocated and *could* have been allocated suggest how stadia might enhance their sense of belonging while positively enforcing the character of the host environment.

The functional and physical fit of a sports facility into the urban environment is, however, a two way process. As important as it is for stadia to be planned in respect of their host environments, so too is it important, as these projects have shown, or the city to respond in kind if their is to be an optimal coexistence. Although the success of their own efforts is debatable, Toronto city planners have put forward the notions that the built form can be planned in response to a facility in efforts to optimize economic spin-offs and to enhance the sense of place, and that the association of the experience of attending an event with the experience of going to an event need not be restricted to traditional-style ballparks. Similarly, while Oriole Park, as mentioned, successfully advances the concept of planning a ballpark in response to the city, this case leads one to question the ultimate virtues of such efforts if the city is allowed to subsequently turns its back on the facility, both functionally and physically.

Furthermore, cities' responsibilities go beyond planning considerations to adopting an economically responsible frame of mind in undertaking these projects. While considerations of the surrounding environment can return economic dividends, cases cited in this thesis also warn against overconfidence and subsequent overexposure of municipalities to economic costs.

In sum, both Oriole Park and SkyDome demonstrate that stadia can be planned in synergy with the urban environment; both the long established city and that which is yet to come. It is clear, based on these divergent cases, that urban environments and stadia

can have much to offer each other. As this thesis described, this potential harmony relates to issues ranging from economics to compatibility of land uses and ancillary services to fostering a sense of place. In both their accomplishments and shortcomings, the cases demonstrate that stadia ought not be relegated to the suburbs by definition. Rather, they show that if subjected to urban constraints, located in appropriate urban settings, and planned in coordination with their environments, a stadium can be a welcome, appropriate addition to the urban environment.

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